

HISTORY of WAR



"WE ALL DIE HERE"
ROYAL MARINES' LAST STAND

ARNHEM 1944 // WAS 1ST AIRBORNE DIVISION'S DARING
PARATROOPER ASSAULT DOOMED TO FAIL?

MARKET GARDEN




**UKRAINE'S
VC HERO**
DARING BAYONET
CHARGE



MYSORE CONQUEST
How Britain won the brutal
Siege of Seringapatam

'TURRET FIGHTER'
Inside the unsung
Boulton Paul Defiant



RUSSIA'S NEMESIS
The Imam rebel who
challenged the Tsar

KING & COUNTRY'S

ARNHEM '75

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MG078

75 YEARS AGO, on Sunday 17 September 1944, three Allied airborne divisions descended on German-occupied Holland to capture vital road and rail bridges over major rivers and canals in three Dutch towns — Eindhoven... Nijmegen... and Arnhem.



MG077

Meanwhile along the tree-lined, double track road connecting the three towns the British XXX Corps with its tanks, armoured cars and halftracks would force their way through, link up with the airborne forces and advance into Nazi Germany itself.

That was the audacious plan for 'Operation Market Garden'. If it had succeeded, it could have ended the war in late 1944. Alas for many it failed and one of the places where it came to most grief was the small town in Holland called... ARNHEM.

AIR101

Airspeed Horsa Glider
L: 64 cm W: 84 cm
Scale: 1:30



MG076 "Planning Market Garden"



75th ANNIVERSARY

To mark the 75th Anniversary of 'Operation Market Garden' King & Country will release over three months several sets of British paratroopers in action as well as others moving towards the bridges of Arnhem on that first day. Some of those sets are shown here.

A very special 'Arnhem Planners' set shows Generals Browning, Horrocks, Urquhart and Sosabowski with a large map board of the Arnhem area behind them.

Also available will be a Humber Scout Car with Lt. Col. J.O.E. Vandeleur



MG079

of the Irish Guards who led the advance of XXX Corps during 'Operation Market Garden'.

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MG083

British Humber MK.1 Scout Car



wings and is the perfect backdrop for our British airborne soldiers.

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E-mail: sales@kingandcountry.com

KING & COUNTRY SHOP

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Welcome

After the Allied invasion of Occupied France, culminating in the Battle of the Falaise Pocket that devastated and routed the German 7th Army, many could have hoped the end of the war was in sight. If successful, Operation Market Garden was intended to bring that end, yet infamously it turned into a military disaster, and is still the subject of controversy and debate 75 years later. This issue, historian William F Buckingham explores some of the popular myths surrounding the operation, and suggests why the real reasons for the failure might be more fundamental than previously thought.

Tim Williamson
Editor-in-Chief



CONTRIBUTORS

TOM GARNER

Tom had his work cut out for him this month, with a foot both in ancient world (Frontline: Second Punic War, starting on page 14) and 20th century conflicts (interview with Falklands War veteran George Thomsen, page 54).



STUART HADAWAY

This issue Stuart takes a look at the lesser-known Boulton Paul Defiant for the Operator's Handbook (page 74). He also explores the brutal Siege of Seringapatam, as the East India Company invaded the Kingdom of Mysore (page 46).



MARIANNA BUKOWSKI

Alongside our cover feature on Operation Market Garden this month, Marianna takes a look at the contribution of the 1st Independent Polish Parachute Brigade to the battle, led by the formidable Stanislaw Sosabowski (page 38).



MARKET GARDEN

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Frontline

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Rome and Carthage vie for dominance over the Mediterranean, Sicily and North Africa

18 Battle of Cannae

This encounter would seal Hannibal's genius as a supreme battlefield commander

20 Could Hannibal have taken Rome?

After their overwhelming victory in 216 BCE, the Carthaginians held sway on the Italian peninsula

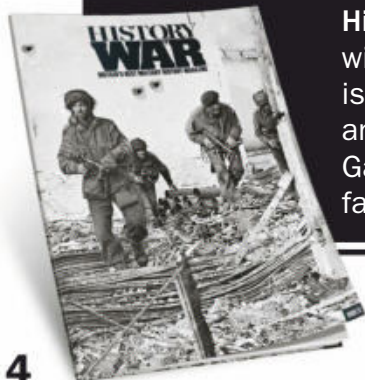
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Politicians and polymaths fought alongside soldiers on the frontline of this lengthy conflict

SUBSCRIBER EXCLUSIVE

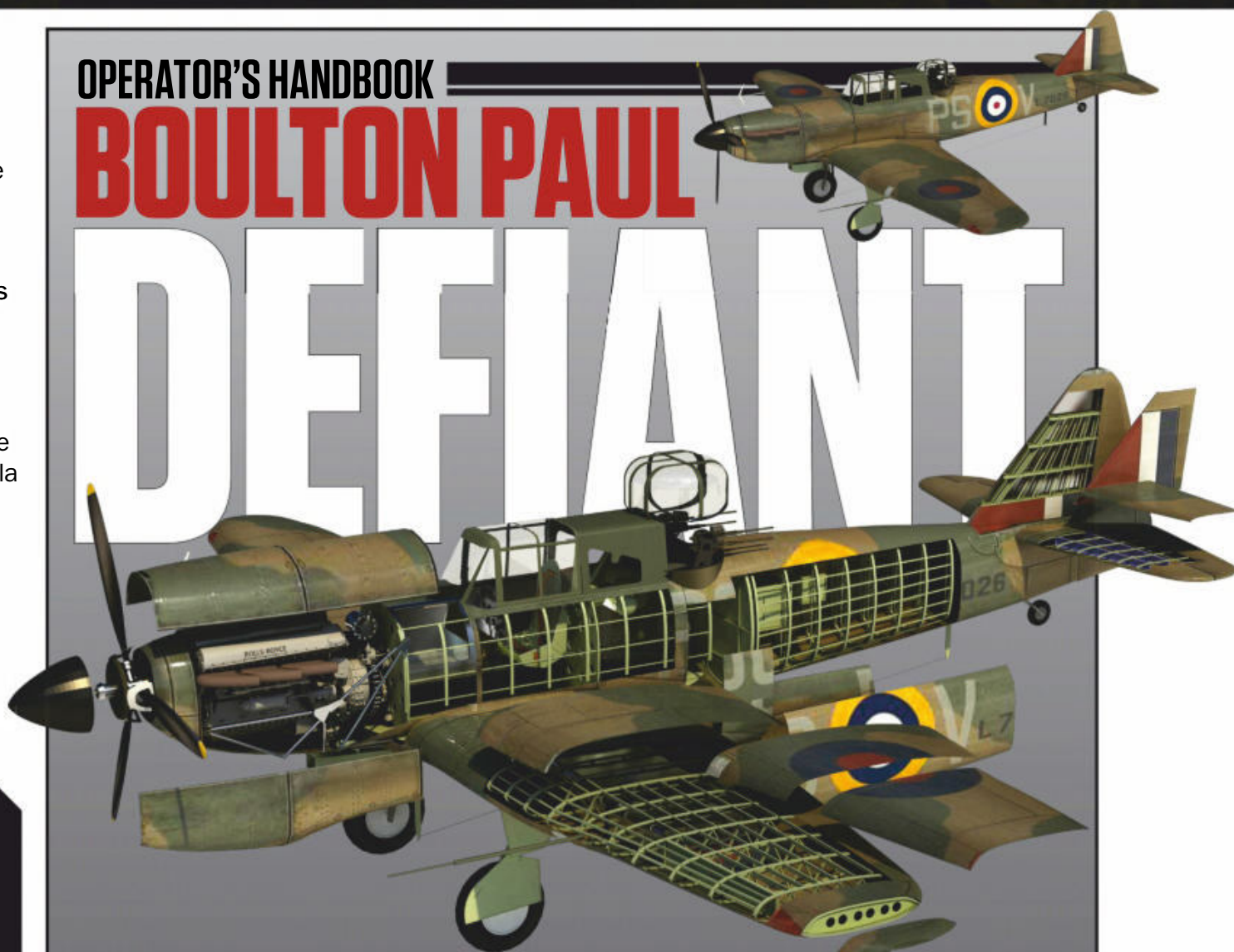


History of War Subscribers will notice a special cover this issue, commemorating the 75th anniversary of Operation Market Garden. **Turn to page 44** to find fantastic Subscriber deals!

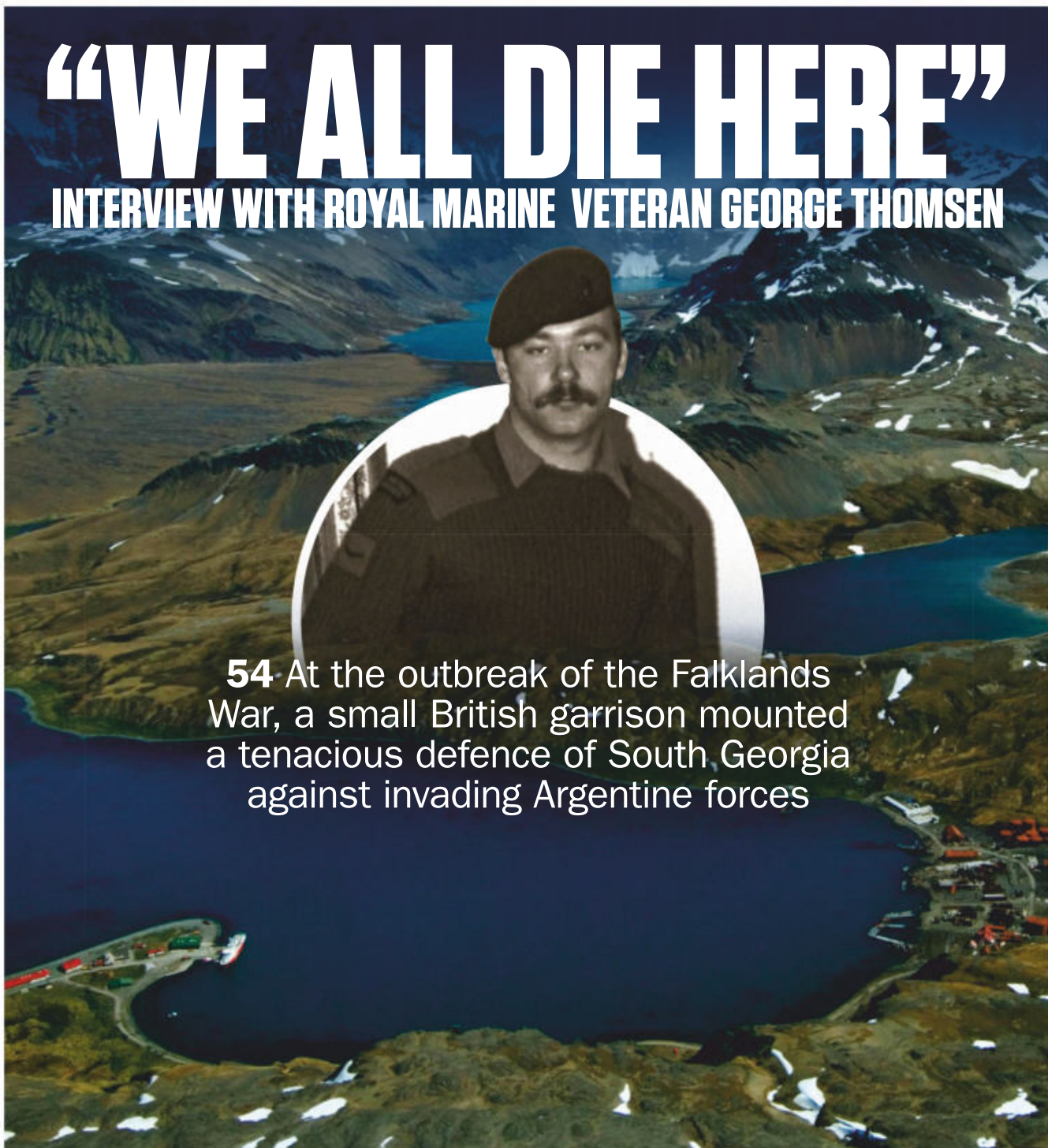
OPERATOR'S HANDBOOK

BOULTON PAUL

DEFIANT



74 This two-man 'turret fighter' was a curious sight in the high-speed dogfights over Britain



“WE ALL DIE HERE”

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Louis Bonaparte’s banner
A relic of France’s imperial dominance





WARⁱⁿ FOCUS

FIRE SUPPORT

Taken: 9 June, 1951

An American gun crew crouches as they fire their M20 75mm recoilless rifle, in support of infantry units across the valley. First deployed in the closing months of WWII, the M20 became a mainstay of US forces and their allies in post-1945 conflicts. Although designed as an anti-tank weapon, it was also used against enemy infantry positions and light armour.





WAR_{in} FOCUS

TUNEFUL TRENCHES

Taken: c. 1914

A soldier plays a travel or 'trench' cello for his comrades during the early months of WWI. Although many soldiers were known to build improvised instruments from ammunition boxes and other materials, these small, compact box cellos were designed for holidays and long-distance travel. Once war broke out they proved ideal for dismal, cramped trenches.





WAR_{in} **FOCUS**

MELTING POINT

Taken: 1943

German soldiers melting snow for drinking water in front of their wooden hut, on the Lapland Front in northern Scandinavia. After Finland's separate peace with the Soviet Union in 1944, this front became the focus of the Lapland War between September and November, as Nazi forces withdrew to Norway.

The brief conflict lasted until Germany's surrender.

WARⁱⁿ FOCUS

HOLY ORDERS

Taken: **1944**

A B-17 Flying Fortress crew kneel as a priest leads prayers at an airfield in southern England. From around late 1943, the United States Army Air Force decided not to daub their aircraft in olive drab paint, but rather to leave them unpainted. For the large, four-engine B-17s, this meant a huge weight saving, making the aircraft more fuel-efficient.





Image: Getty

TIMELINE OF THE...

SECOND PUNIC WAR

Rome fought an apocalyptic conflict with Carthage between 218-201 BCE that changed the balance of power in the Mediterranean Basin

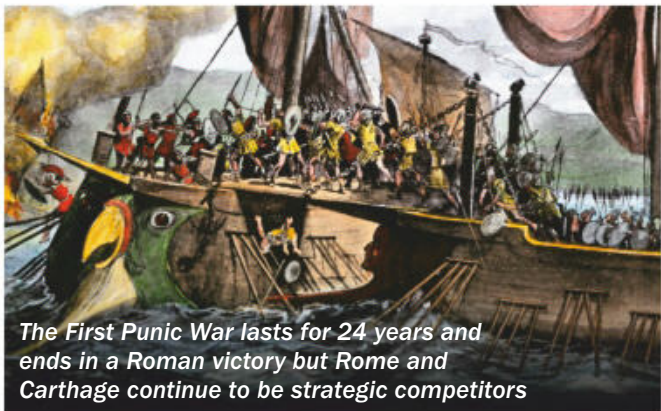
BATTLE OF RHONE CROSSING

Due to Roman control of the Mediterranean Sea, Hannibal decides to attack Italy overland from the north. Moving up from Spain into southern France, the Carthaginians must cross the Rhône River to enter Italy. They defeat local Volcae Gallic tribesmen and cross the river in Hannibal's first battle outside of Iberia.

264 BCE –

ORIGINS

Carthage is defeated in the First Punic War (264-241 BCE) and loses Sardinia and Corsica to Rome. However, the Carthaginians gain control in Iberia and tensions rise over the hegemony of Saguntum, a Hellenized coastal city with Roman connections.



The First Punic War lasts for 24 years and ends in a Roman victory but Rome and Carthage continue to be strategic competitors

May-December 219 BCE

SIEGE OF SAGUNTUM 01

Hannibal, the Carthaginian military leader in Iberia, besieges pro-Roman Saguntum. Rome does not send aid and Hannibal kills every adult in the city after they refuse to leave unarmed. War consequently breaks out the following year.

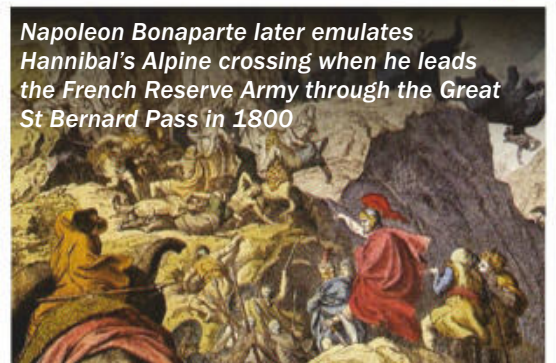
The Romans later build a castle and theatre at Saguntum (now Sagunto)



September 218 BCE

May/June-October 218 BCE

Napoleon Bonaparte later emulates Hannibal's Alpine crossing when he leads the French Reserve Army through the Great St Bernard Pass in 1800



HANNIBAL CROSSES ALPS

With tens of thousands of men and dozens of war elephants, Hannibal crosses the Alps in one of the most celebrated events of military history. The arduous but successful crossing enables the Carthaginians to bypass Roman garrisons and naval ships to establish a base of operations in Italy.



Hannibal's elephants cross the Rhône on specially constructed rafts

BATTLE OF EBRO RIVER 03

Roman general Gnaeus Cornelius Scipio Calvus defeats Himilco in a surprise naval engagement. The Carthaginians lose 29 ships out of 40 including four sunk and 25 captured. This success enhances the Romans' reputation in Iberia.

"THE CARTHAGINIANS LOSE 29 SHIPS OUT OF 40 INCLUDING FOUR SUNK AND 25 CAPTURED"

The captured Carthaginian ships are quinqueremes, large ancient galleys that can house several banks of oars



BATTLE OF LAKE TRASIMENE 04

Hannibal defeats Consul Gaius Flaminius in central Italy by forcing many Roman troops into Lake Trasimene where they are drowned or massacred. Around 15,000 Romans are killed, including Flaminius, in what military historian Basil Liddell Hart later calls "the greatest ambush in history".

Right: Roman infantrymen being slaughtered on the banks of the lake during "the greatest ambush in history"



December 218 BCE

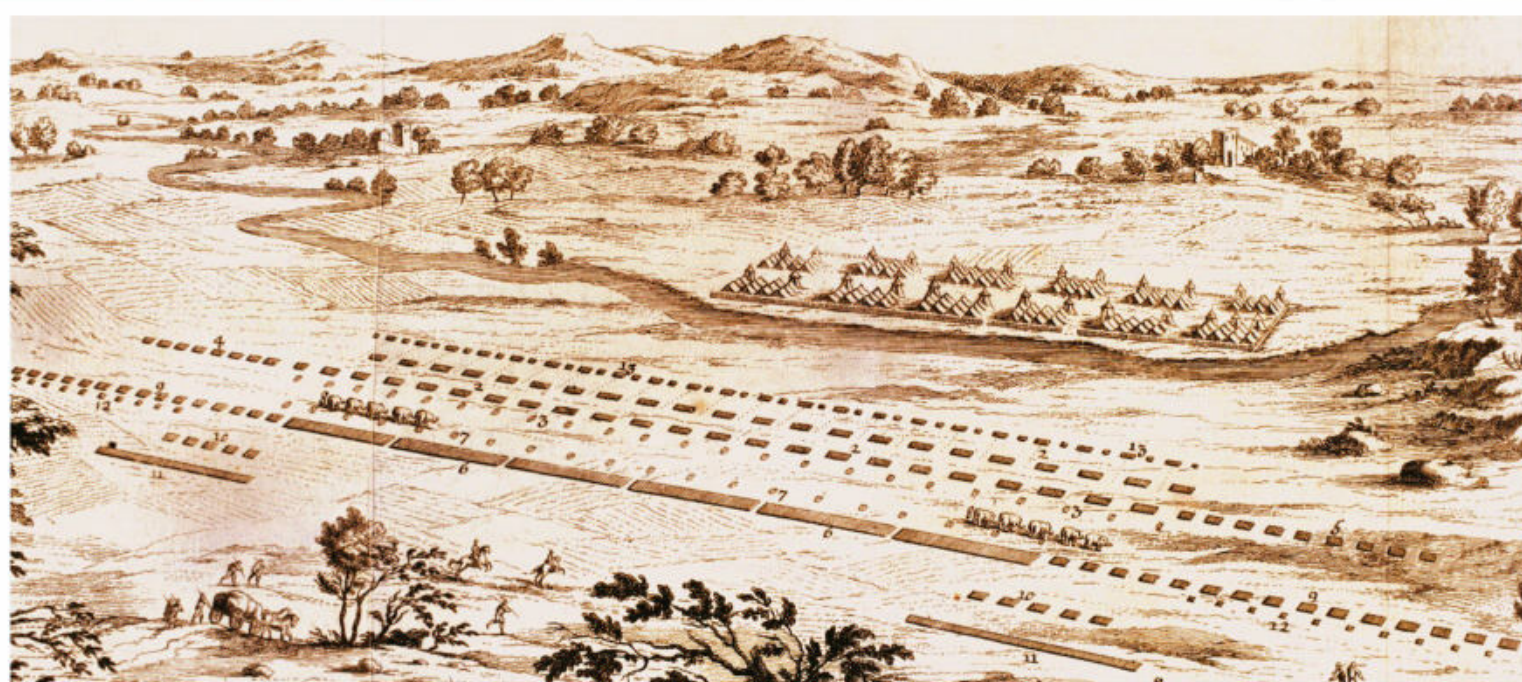
Spring 217 BCE

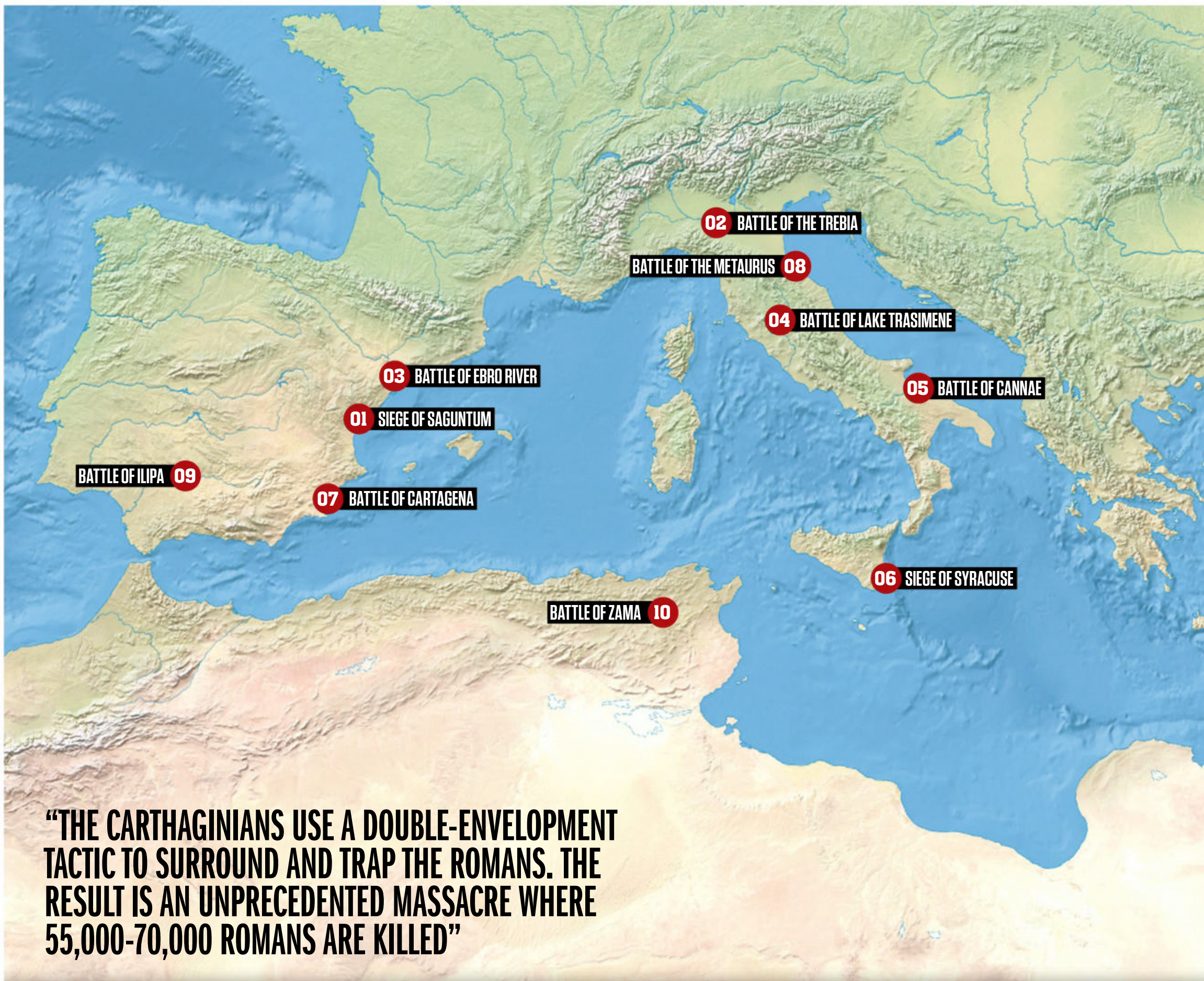
21 June 217 BCE

BATTLE OF THE TREBIA 02

The Trebia is the first major battle of the war where Hannibal heavily defeats Roman consul Tiberius Sempronius Longus who is provoked into a difficult frontal assault. The entrapped Romans are then slaughtered with only approximately 10,000 survivors from an initial force of 42,000 men.

An early 18th century engraving of the Battle of the Trebia. Hannibal's victory persuades many Celts of northern Italy to support the Carthaginians





“THE CARTHAGINIANS USE A DOUBLE-ENVELOPMENT TACTIC TO SURROUND AND TRAP THE ROMANS. THE RESULT IS AN UNPRECEDENTED MASSACRE WHERE 55,000-70,000 ROMANS ARE KILLED”

2 August 216 BCE Spring 213-Autumn 212 BCE



BATTLE OF CANNAE 05

The zenith of Hannibal's military career occurs at Cannae in very hot weather. The Carthaginians use a double-envelopment tactic to surround and trap the Romans. The result is an unprecedented massacre where 55,000-70,000 Romans are killed. Nevertheless, despite the scale of his victory, Hannibal does not march on Rome.

The Roman losses at Cannae have since been compared to the slaughter of the British Army on the first day of the Battle of the Somme

SIEGE OF SYRACUSE 06

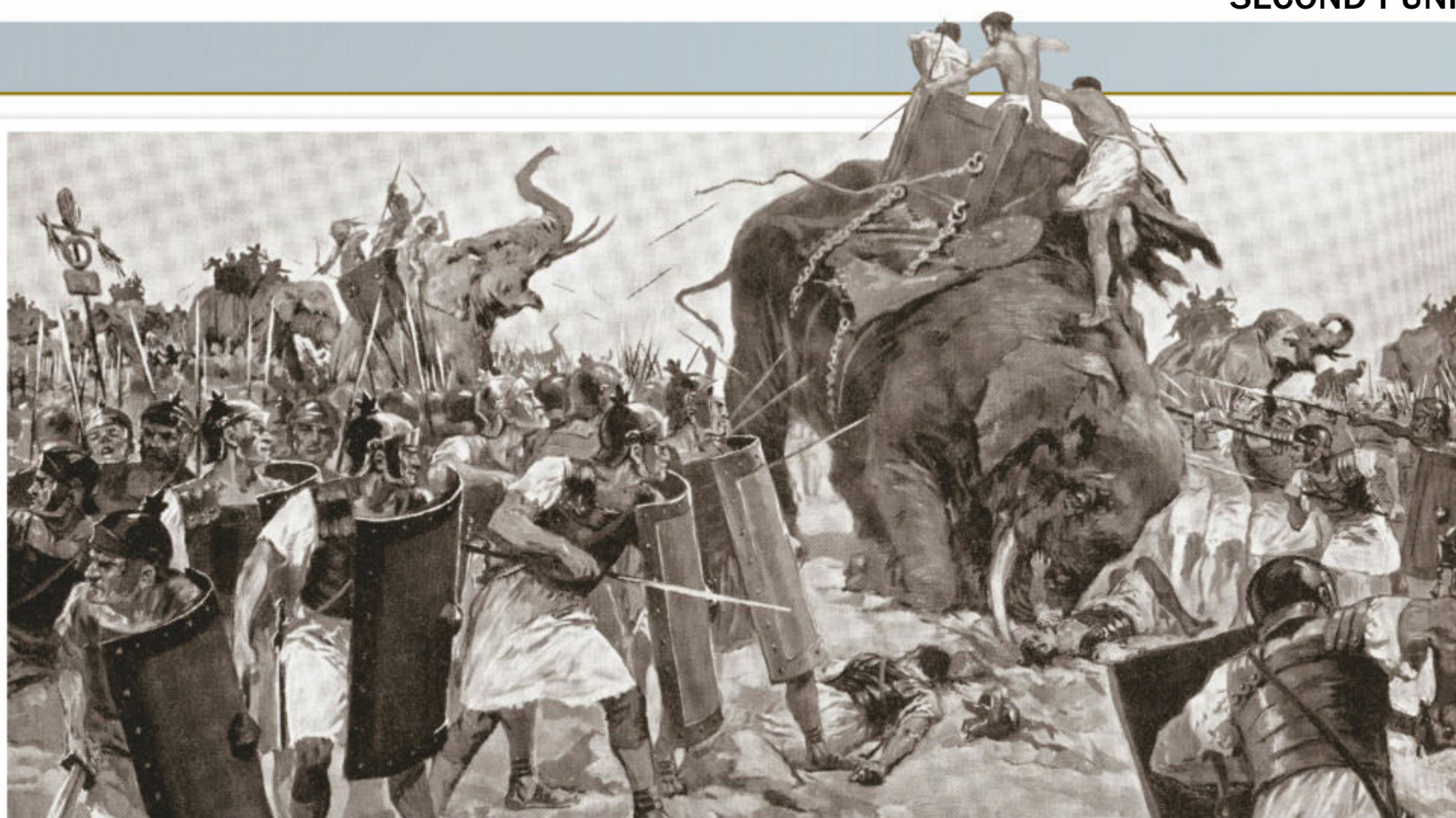
The Romans besiege the Hellenistic port but its citizens force the besiegers to settling into a blockade. Carthaginian armed forces attempt to relieve Syracuse but fail. The eventual fall of the city marks the end of the independence of Greek cities in southern Italy and Sicily.

Archimedes helps with the defences of Syracuse and is killed by a Roman soldier when the city is stormed



BATTLE OF ZAMA 10

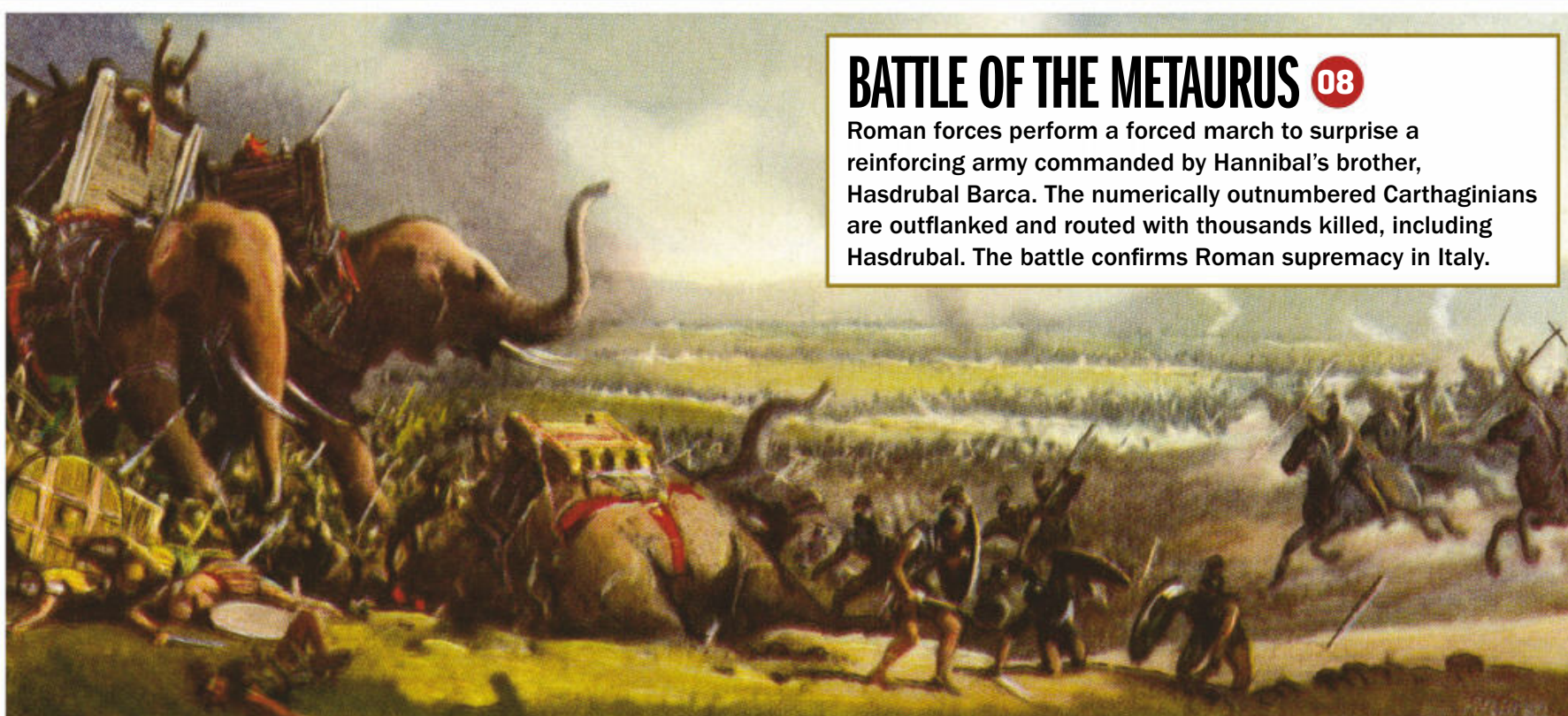
Scipio decisively defeats Hannibal in the last major battle of the war. Approximately 20,000 Carthaginians are killed compared to 1,500 Romans. Zama effectively ends Hannibal's command of Carthaginian forces and Carthage's chances to significantly oppose Rome.



Above: Scipio receives the agnomen 'Africanus' for his great victory at Zama

BATTLE OF THE METAURUS 08

Roman forces perform a forced march to surprise a reinforcing army commanded by Hannibal's brother, Hasdrubal Barca. The numerically outnumbered Carthaginians are outflanked and routed with thousands killed, including Hasdrubal. The battle confirms Roman supremacy in Italy.



Left: After the Metaurus, Hannibal is forced to evacuate pro-Carthaginian towns in southern Italy and withdraws to Bruttium (Calabria)

January-February 209 BCE

22 June 207 BCE

Spring 206 BCE

202 BCE

201 BCE

BATTLE OF CARTAGENA 07

Roman commander Scipio assaults the Carthaginian stronghold of Cartagena (New Carthage) with 27,500 soldiers. After isolating the town from land and sea, the Romans storm Cartagena and massacre or enslave its entire population. Scipio's victory forces the Carthaginians to surrender the entire eastern coast of Spain.

Remains of a Punic War-era crypt chamber at Cartagena



BATTLE OF ILIPA 09

Scipio wins his most famous engagement of the war east of what is now Seville. Although they are outnumbered, the Romans perform a surprise dawn manoeuvre to force the Carthaginians to hurry into battle. Scipio then wins a decisive victory that ends Carthaginian power in Iberia.

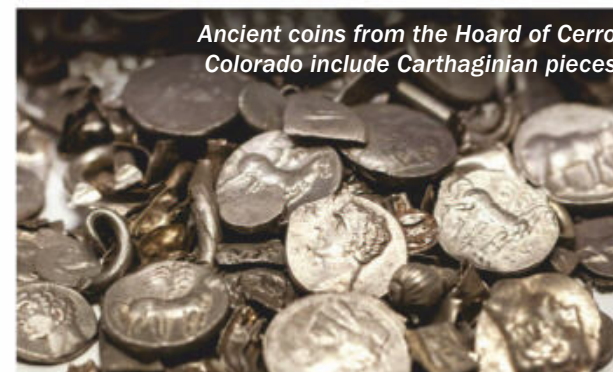
The Romans later build this amphitheatre in Seville, not far from their victorious battlefield at Ilipa



THE CARTHAGINIAN PEACE

Carthage cedes Iberia to Rome, surrenders most of its warships (including 100 that are publicly burned) and begins paying a 50-year indemnity of 10,000 silver talents. By contrast, Rome's victory is a key step in ensuring the city's domination of the Mediterranean world.

Ancient coins from the Hoard of Cerro Colorado include Carthaginian pieces



THE BATTLE OF CANNAE

After a successful initial invasion of Italy, the Carthaginians faced the crème of the Roman military might in a brutal against-the-odds battle

Hannibal, sworn to enmity for Rome since childhood, quickly defeated two Roman armies at the Trebia and Lake Trasimene, shortly after invading Italy. However, on the large sweeping plains near Cannae, he would meet a very different challenge. Those victories had been achieved largely thanks to Roman hubris and error, but now Rome had raised a new army, 80,000

strong to face Hannibal's own force of less than half that number. The Carthaginian had more (and better) cavalry, but in this period it was largely the heavy infantry that won battles. Rome had new consuls, Gaius Terrentius Varro and Lucius Aemilius Paulus, who would take them to victory. This new Roman army pursued Hannibal to the town of Cannae which the Carthaginian had seized.

The Romans drew up their legions in their regular formation, infantry (in three lines) in the centre and cavalry on the wings. The three Roman lines, the triplex acies, were made up of Hastati in the front, Principes in the second rank to support them and the Triarii in the third rank, the most experienced men, there to shore up the line and fight only if needed. Velites,

light armed troops, would skirmish at the start of the battle and then withdraw.

Hannibal's trap

In one of his previous encounters with the Romans, at a river crossing called the Trebia, Hannibal had ambushed his unsuspecting foe on the shores of Lake Trasimene. Cannae was to be fought on a flat open plain, which was surely to the Romans' advantage. In order to lure his overconfident enemy in, Hannibal drew up his line in a crescent, curving outwards towards the opposition. His line was made up of Spanish and Celtic mercenaries in the centre. On each edge of his crescent, Hannibal placed his most reliable troops, his native Carthaginian veterans. His left flank

A statue of Hannibal in the Louvre. He became the bogey man of Roman children's nightmares for centuries

The plain of Cannae should have provided the Romans with the perfect battlefield to press their advantage



was anchored on the Aufidius river. Unusually, Hannibal placed his slingers, from the Balearic Isles, behind his main infantry. On the left flank, Hannibal's brother, Hasdrubal commanded a cavalry division, on the right the cavalry were commanded by Hannibal's nephew, Hanno. Both of these cavalry divisions outnumbered the Roman cavalry opposite them. This was key to Hannibal's plan.

The battle opened with the expected cavalry engagement. On both wings, Hanno and Hasdrubal drove off the numerically inferior cavalry of the Romans. The Romans, however, expected to decide the battle with their heavy infantry and advanced. Outnumbered two-to-one, the Spanish and Celtic mercenaries were forced back. To the men of the Roman legions, this meant victory.

The trap is sprung

Giving ground was exactly what Hannibal intended, however. As his infantry withdrew (in good order) from the advancing Roman legions, Hannibal's slingers fired their lethal bullets over the heads Hannibal's ranks and into the lines of the Romans. All Hannibal had to do was wait, eventually his formation bowed in the opposite directions with its ends anchored to Hannibal's African veterans. Both Hanno and Hasdrubal

had defeated the Roman cavalry on their respective wings, and had then driven off and pursued the enemy horsemen. This was a limited pursuit, however. Both forces of Hannibal's cavalry then stopped and prepared to return to the battlefield, charging into the rear of the Roman infantry formation. This they did, affecting the most perfect double envelopment in the history of warfare.

The return of the Carthaginian cavalry took the Romans completely by surprise. They were surrounded and could not fight their way out. Their numbers now worked against them as they were forced against one another as the slaughter played out. The Romans were annihilated, losing almost every man. Sources vary but place the number of Roman dead between 65,000 and 80,000.

ROME'S TRIPLE THREAT

THE THREE LINES OF ROME'S MILITARY MIGHT WOULD CONQUER AN EMPIRE. AGAINST HANNIBAL HOWEVER, THEY STUMBLER

Rome developed its three fighting lines over centuries of experience. Each man was armed with a spear (pila, heavy throwing), sword (gladius), and shield (scuta). The Hastati were in the front rank, the youngest, in units (maniples) of 120 men each. There were ten such units in a legion. Behind them were the more experienced Principes who were similarly equipped and also organised into maniples of 120 men. Both Hastati and Principes would advance, throw their pila and then draw their swords for hand-to-hand combat. The last line consisted of the most experienced men, the Triarii. Armed with heavier spears they would shore up the line and hold fast – it became a Roman saying in difficult times that 'it comes down to the Triarii' because they were the last line of defence. Triarii were organised into maniples of 60 men and originally had round shields (clipeus). These were slowly replaced by scuta shields, the same as their fellow legionaries.

“BOTH FORCES OF HANNIBAL'S CAVALRY THEN STOPPED AND PREPARED TO RETURN TO THE BATTLEFIELD, CHARGING INTO THE REAR OF THE ROMAN INFANTRY FORMATION”





Roman women supplicating the gods to save the city from Hannibal and the Carthaginians

COULD HANNIBAL HAVE **TAKEN ROME?**

Hannibal utterly defeated successive Roman armies in the field, but not the city of Rome itself

In Autumn 216 BCE, Hannibal was the master of Italy. He had defeated consular armies in 218, 217 and 216, most recently destroying 80,000 men at Cannae. Elsewhere, Rome was being defeated too. The city stood at Hannibal's mercy and yet he did not place it under siege, and he never would. Nor would Hannibal come as close to taking Rome's empire again. Yet he would stay in Italy until forced to return to Carthage in 203 BCE. After his victory at Cannae, it was expected that Hannibal would march on Rome. One story recorded by the Roman historian Livy (22.51), now doubted, is that Hannibal's second-in-command, Maharbal, vented his frustration at his commander telling him "you know how to win a battle, but you do not know how to use it".

There are several factors in Hannibal's decision. First, his army had just fought a battle and needed to rest. The disproportionate casualties in our sources may not reflect the truth and Hannibal's army may well have suffered more casualties than the sources let on. What is more, Hannibal was not prepared for, or equipped to mount a siege. It was already August and he did not want to be caught in a siege during winter. His previous sieges (at Saguntum and Nola) had not been successful, or had cost him casualties that he could now not afford. He had also not been resupplied from Carthage, and would not be. His city essentially left him to his own devices. When he did manage to take Tarentum, it was by treachery not siege, but many of these factors were beyond Hannibal's control.

After Cannae, most of southern Italy turned to Hannibal, but perhaps the reputation of the Carthaginians for being harsh overlords also played against him. Rome made a determined effort to win her allies back and did so. Meanwhile, Rome's allies further north stayed loyal. Hannibal was unable to dislodge allies from Rome easily in the Italian peninsula, they

simply preferred to keep their alliances with Rome rather than make new agreements with the Carthaginians.

Also beyond Hannibal's control was what the Romans did. Despite the panic in the city, they did not sue for terms. The massive manpower resources of Rome had already been in evidence. In three successive years Hannibal had destroyed consular armies only to have them replaced the following year. When she had lost the battle of Trasimene in 217, panic had spread through Rome. Quintus Fabius Maximus was appointed Dictator to deal with the crisis. His major policy (in addition to placating the gods) was to avoid another pitched battle and engage in a scorched earth policy instead. He was derided for this policy and given the nickname 'Cunctator' or 'delayer' as an insult.

His dictatorship lapsed after six months and the following year the consuls again faced Hannibal, at Cannae. That disaster was even worse than Trasimene had been and the wisdom of Fabius's tactics shone through. He was looked to for guidance and his policy enacted (even though he was not made dictator again). According to the Roman biographer Plutarch, Hannibal feared two things: the manpower resources of Rome and Fabius.

A second major factor against Hannibal was his eventual conqueror, Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus. Scipio had served in Rome's early battles against Hannibal as a tribune and learned first-hand of the man's genius. Scipio then put those lessons into practice in Spain, wresting it from Carthaginian control from 211 onwards where he was proconsul at the unprecedented age of only 25.

In Spain, Scipio was able to defeat Hannibal's brothers and other Carthaginian commanders. He took Carthago Nova, Carthage's capital in Spain and was able to persuade Carthage's important ally, Numidia, to defect to Rome. Scipio realised the importance of cavalry against Rome's heavy infantry, one of the few commanders to perceive this at the time. In fact, Scipio achieved all the things Hannibal had been unable to. In 205 Scipio was elected consul even though he was only 31 (the minimum age was 42). Scipio invaded Africa itself in 203, forcing Hannibal to abandon Italy, and, at the battle of Zama in 202 BCE the student defeated the master and Rome finally defeated Carthage. Hannibal, for all his qualities, never stood a chance.

**"SCIPIO HAD SERVED IN
ROME'S EARLY BATTLES
AGAINST HANNIBAL AS A
TRIBUNES AND LEARNED FIRST-
HAND OF THE MAN'S GENIUS"**

Right: The major reason Hannibal could not defeat Rome: Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus, known as Cunctator 'the delayer'

Image: Herzi Pinki

WEAPONS

Sword, javelin, spear & sling swelled the battle lines of both sides

The weapons of war for Roman legionaries and their Carthaginian enemies were essential tools, developed and refined over time. However, in many cases the terminology of these weapons remained the same for centuries and we can lose sight of how period-specific some of them were.

HEAVY ARMOUR

Roman legionaries in this period relied on bronze breastplates or a mail coat (lorica hamata). They wore bronze helmets (these are Montefortino types) decorated with horsehair plumes and feathers. By far the most distinguishing feature, however, was the scuta, a large oval shield.



The Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus shows typical 2nd century Roman legionaries but they were largely unchanged from the Second Punic Wars. Note the helmet, armour and spined scuta shields

GLADIUS

Despite being armed with heavy javelins, the Roman legionary's primary weapon was his gladius – a Gladius Hispaniense during the Second Punic War. This was longer and heavier than later Roman swords but still shorter than most, ideal for stabbing over the shield.

FOREIGN MERCENARIES

Much of Hannibal's army was made up of mercenaries. They brought weapons of their own and way of fighting which often leave no trace. It is a testament to Hannibal's leadership that he could mould his army into a singular and effective fighting force.

This Spanish relief shows a typical warrior in Hannibal's army with spined oval shield and falcata sword



SLINGERS

The sling was a ubiquitous weapon in ancient armies but it seldom receives attention because it is not an heroic weapon (David aside). The weight and speed of sling stones or lead sling bullets made them utterly lethal and very effective.

Various sized sling bullets could be slung into an enemy's lines causing multiple casualties



MISSILES

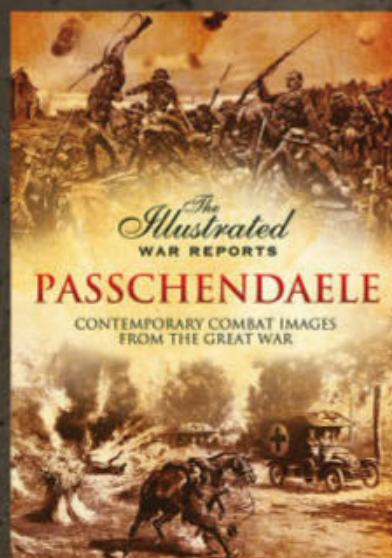
The pila was a heavy javelin. Each of the Roman Hastatii and Principes carried two. These would be thrown before the legionary drew their gladius and advanced. This flexibility made Roman legionaries a combination of missile troop and swordsman.

In the late 2nd century pila were made using a pin so that they could not be thrown back. Occasionally, the point could bend on impact and render them useless



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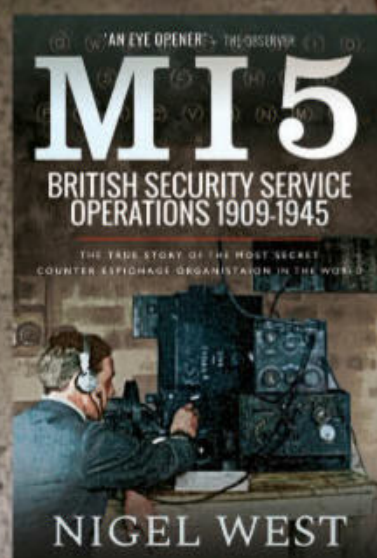
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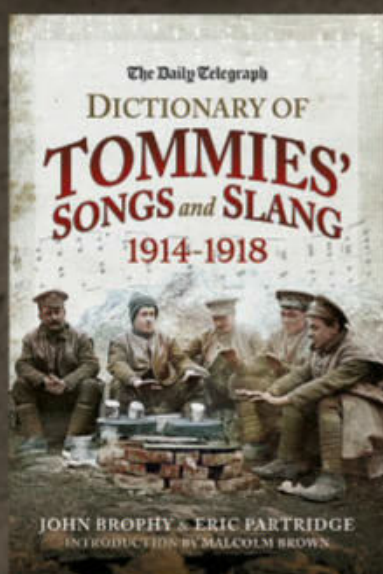
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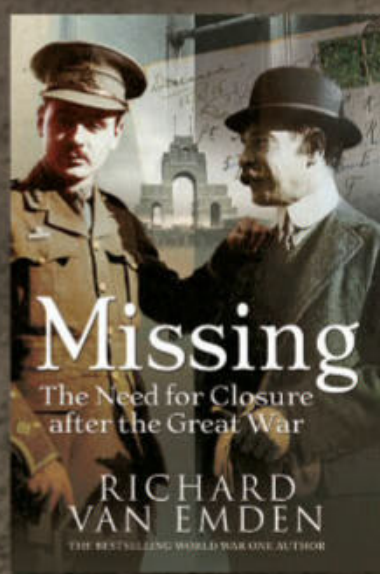
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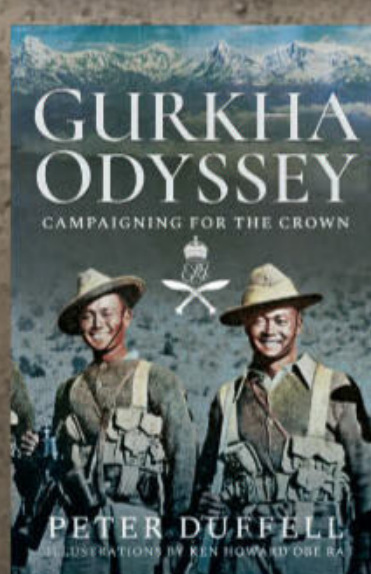
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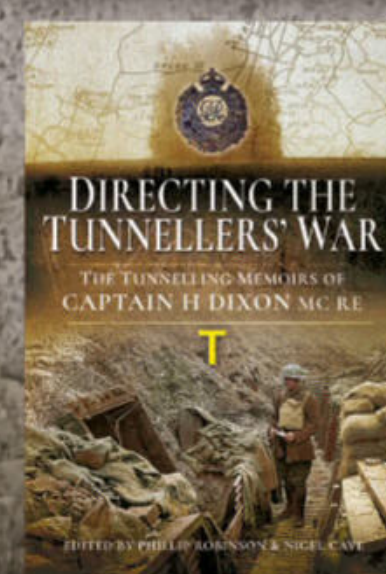
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CARTHAGINIANS & ROMANS

Legendary commanders fought on both sides during the war, as well as a mathematical genius and an ambitious politician

HANNIBAL BARCA THE CARTHAGINIAN MILITARY GENIUS 247-183/181 BCE CARTHAGE

The son of the renowned Carthaginian general Hamilcar Barca, Hannibal spent much of his early life in Spain. His father, who had vigorously fought the Romans during the First Punic War, reputedly made his son swear

eternal hostility to Rome and Hannibal certainly lived up to that oath.

At the age of only 26, Hannibal's military talents were confirmed when he was appointed as the Carthaginian commander-in-chief in Iberia. He conquered various Spanish tribes and won a significant battle on the River Tagus. After attacking the pro-Roman city of Saguntum, open conflict broke out between Rome and Carthage that was the beginning of the Second Punic War.

Hannibal dominated the Carthaginian conduct of the conflict and his grasp of tactics and strategy marked him out as one of the greatest commanders in military history.

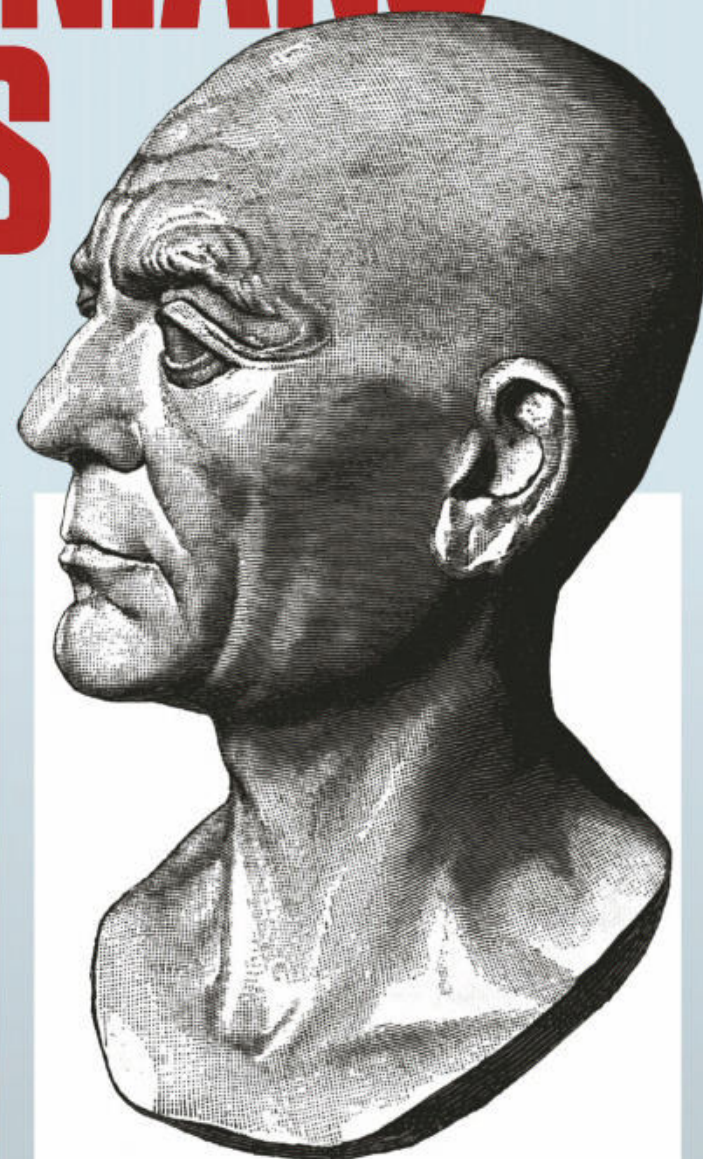
To take the war to the Romans while avoiding their navy, Hannibal audaciously invaded Italy from the north by marching his army through Spain, France and over the Alps in an epic journey that lasted five months.

His achievement was to surmount the difficulties of climate, terrain and tribal guerrillas with a huge army of a multiracial, multilingual diversity that was ill suited to the conditions in which they travelled.

Once he was inside Italy, the Carthaginians continually fought numerically superior Roman armies but won crushing victories. Hannibal's battlefield successes at the Trebia, Lake Trasimene and Cannae among others came close to destroying Roman power. However, Hannibal failed to march on Rome and allowed his enemies to slowly recover.

Hannibal's limited resources in Italy and lack of reinforcements eventually took their toll and he abandoned the peninsula in 203 BCE. The Carthaginians concentrated their forces in their Tunisian homeland after violating an armistice but Hannibal was heavily defeated at Zama in 202 BCE. Although he escaped, Hannibal never militarily campaigned for Carthage again.

A marble bust, reputedly of Hannibal, that was discovered in the ancient city-state of Capua



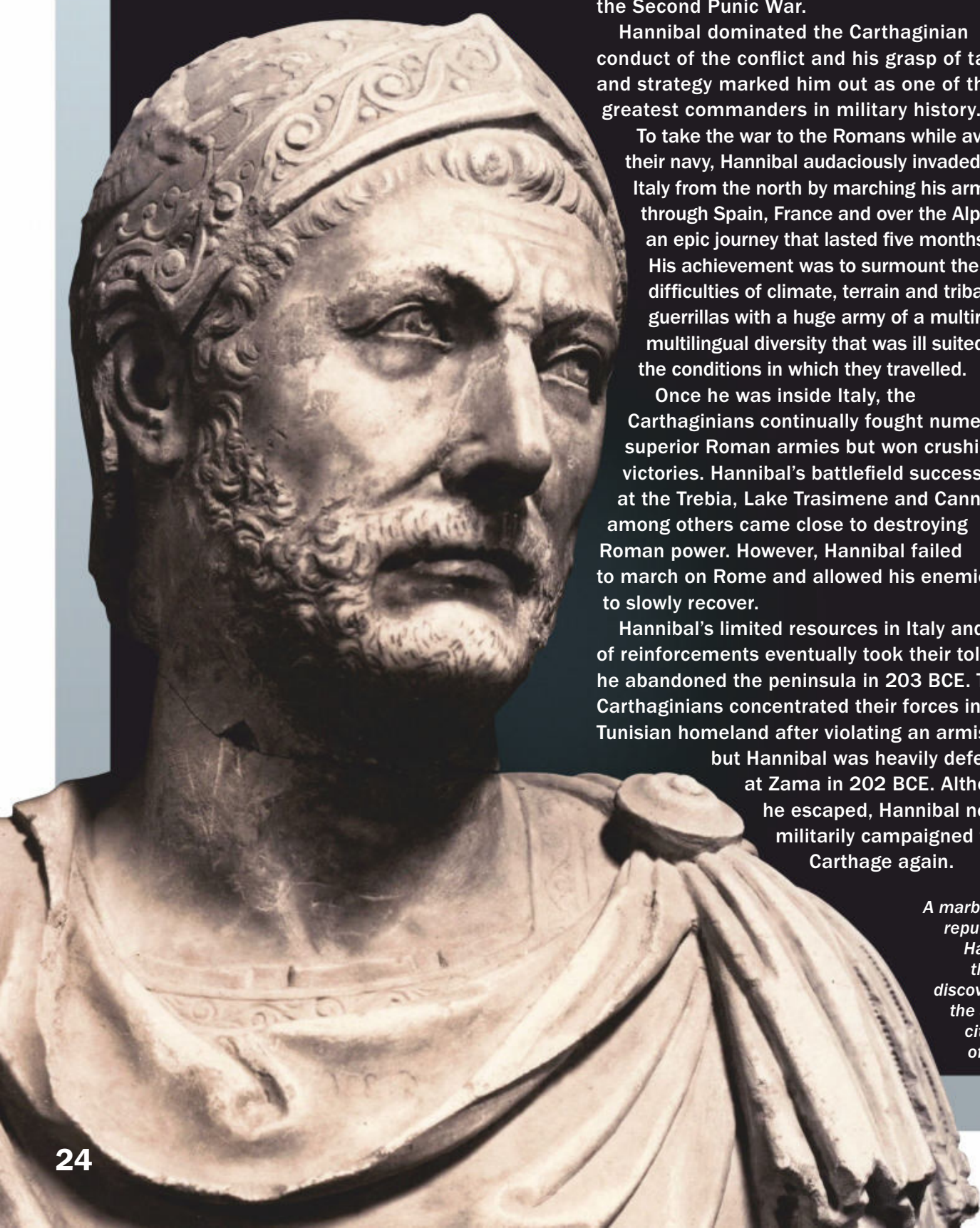
Unlike Hannibal, Scipio never lost a battle and is considered one of Ancient Rome's greatest generals

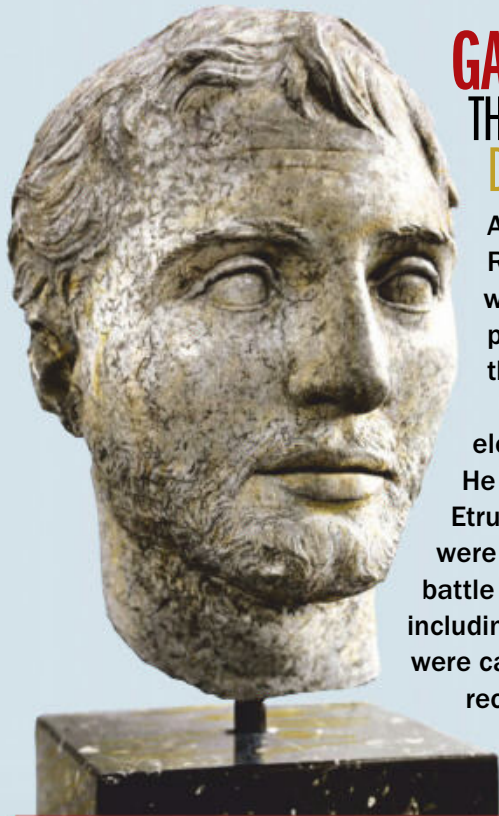
SCIPIO AFRICANUS THE MAN WHO WON THE WAR FOR THE ROMAN EMPIRE 236-183 BCE ROME

Born to a Roman patrician family, Publius Cornelius Scipio initially served as a young military tribune at the Battle of Cannae but escaped the carnage. His fight against the Carthaginians later became personal when his father and uncle were defeated and killed in Spain. Scipio volunteered to command reinforcements sent to Iberia in 210 BCE and over the next four years he drove the Carthaginians from the peninsula.

In 209, Scipio captured Cartagena before defeating Hannibal's brother Hasdrubal Barca the following year at Baecula. He then won a famous battle at Ilipa in 206, which enabled Rome to fully control Iberia. Elected as a consul after this success, Scipio invaded North Africa where he won the Battle of Utica in Tunisia.

In 202, Scipio faced Hannibal himself at the Battle of Zama. The Roman general had learned much from his Carthaginian counterpart and the engagement saw Scipio's horse cavalry decisively defeat Hannibal's war elephants. Zama ended the war and Scipio was named 'Africanus' in honour of his victory.





GAIUS FLAMINIUS

THE CONSUL WHO WAS KILLED AT LAKE TRASIMENE

D.217 BCE ROME

A leading politician, Flaminius was twice elected consul of the Roman Republic. Originally a tribune of the plebs, he was popular with the general population and passed a bill that distributed land to poor Romans in eastern Italy. This made him deeply unpopular with the Senate who frustrated his tenure as governor of Sicily.

When Hannibal invaded Italy in 218 BCE, Flaminius was re-elected as consul the following year and commanded four legions. He moved his army to Arretium to prevent Hannibal from entering Etruria but the Carthaginians evaded his forces. The Romans were then ambushed at Lake Trasimene in a fog and the resulting battle was a colossal defeat. Around 15,000 Romans were killed including Flaminius whose body was never recovered. A further 15,000 were captured and the Senate blamed the disaster on Flaminius's recklessness, neglect of religion and his military inexperience.

Left: Although he was heavily criticised by his contemporaries, the Roman historian Livy said that he fought bravely before his death

QUINTUS FABIUS MAXIMUS VERRUCOSUS

THE GODFATHER OF 'FABIAN STRATEGY'

D.203 BCE ROME

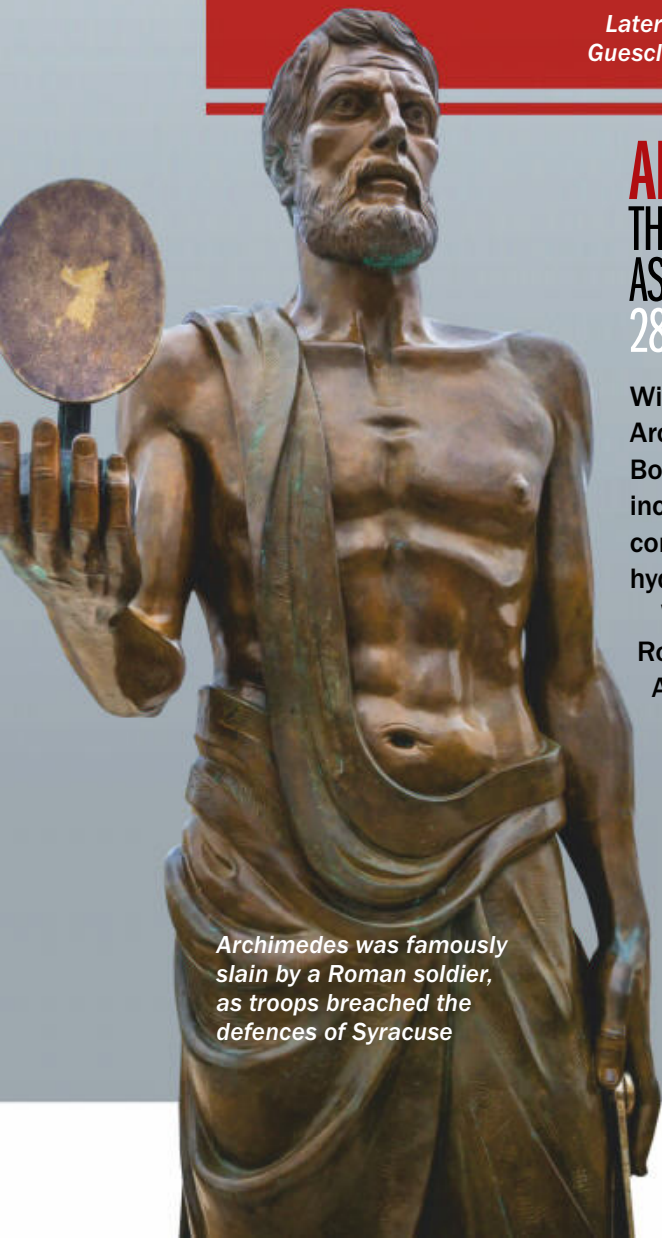
Elected as consul five times, Fabius was also elected as dictator of Rome following Gaius Flaminius's defeat at Lake Trasimene in 217 BCE. Once in power, he deployed an innovative strategy against Hannibal's forces. Fabius's forces manoeuvred in hills, where the Carthaginian cavalry would be useless. This use of terrain enabled the Romans to cut off Hannibal's supplies and they were also able to frequently harass Carthaginian raiding parties.

Although this strategy was widely criticised in Rome, Fabius deliberately allowed Hannibal to exhaust himself without openly confronting him in battle. This allowed the Romans to recover their strength and Fabius's cautious policy became known as 'Fabian Strategy'. Nevertheless, Hannibal was wily enough himself to avoid an entire Roman army commanded by Fabius near Callicula in a knowing reversal of the dictator's strategy.

When Fabius's dictatorship ended, the Romans again attempted to destroy the Carthaginians but they were decisively defeated at Cannae in 216. The Fabian strategy was reintroduced and Fabius once more commanded troops before capturing Taranto in 209.



Later practitioners of Fabian Strategy include Bertrand du Guesclin, George Washington, Sam Houston and Jan Smuts



Archimedes was famously slain by a Roman soldier, as troops breached the defences of Syracuse

ARCHIMEDES

THE MATHEMATICAL POLYMATH WHO INNOVATIVELY ASSISTED THE DEFENCE OF A SIEGE

287-212 BCE GREEK SYRACUSE

Widely considered as one of the greatest mathematicians in history, Archimedes was also a physicist, engineer, inventor and astronomer. Born in Syracuse and educated in Alexandria, his achievements included defining the principle of the lever and the invention of the compound pulley and the hydraulic screw. He also discovered the law of hydrostatics, which became known as 'Archimedes' Principle'.

When Syracuse declared itself a republic and allied with Carthage, Rome laid siege to the city. Syracuse was strongly defended and Archimedes was employed to assist the city. He devised a number of defensive countermeasures that included a powerful hook on a rotating crane that could lift and capsize Roman ships. Most strikingly, he was also said to have developed a curved mirror that focussed the sun's rays onto Roman vessels and set them on fire.

While these military inventions have since been disputed, it is generally agreed Archimedes was probably killed when the Romans finally stormed the city. Many legends state that he was murdered by a Roman soldier while contemplating a mathematical diagram.

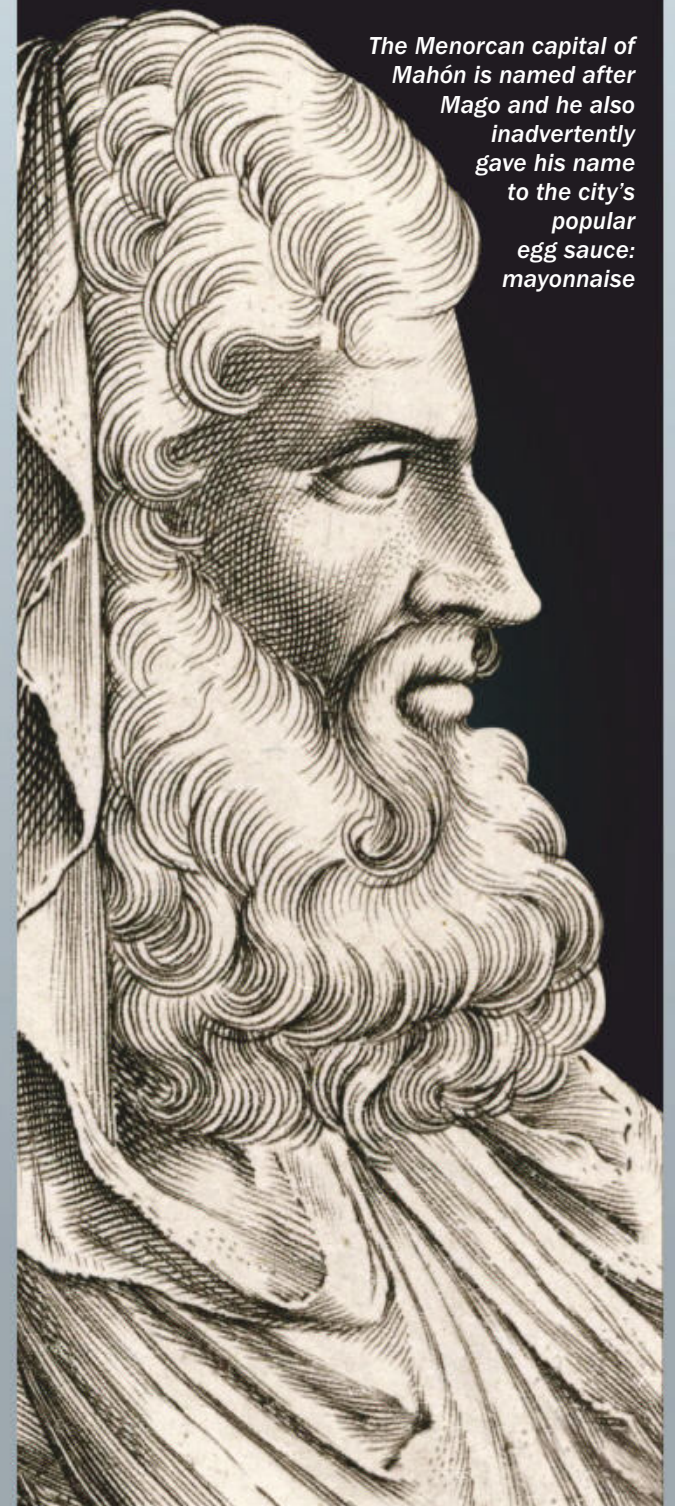
MAGO BARCA

HANNIBAL'S FIGHTING YOUNGER BROTHER

D.203 BCE CARTHAGE

The youngest of Hamilcar Barca's three sons, Mago accompanied his brother Hannibal during the invasion of Italy. He held key commands in the great victories of the first three years of war on the Italian peninsula after the Battle of Cannae he was dispatched to Spain to fight alongside his other brother Hasdrubal. The two brothers succeeded in killing prominent Roman commanders in an ambush near Arka Leuke in 214 BCE but this only prompted Scipio Africanus (whose father was among the slain) to invade Iberia with reinforcements.

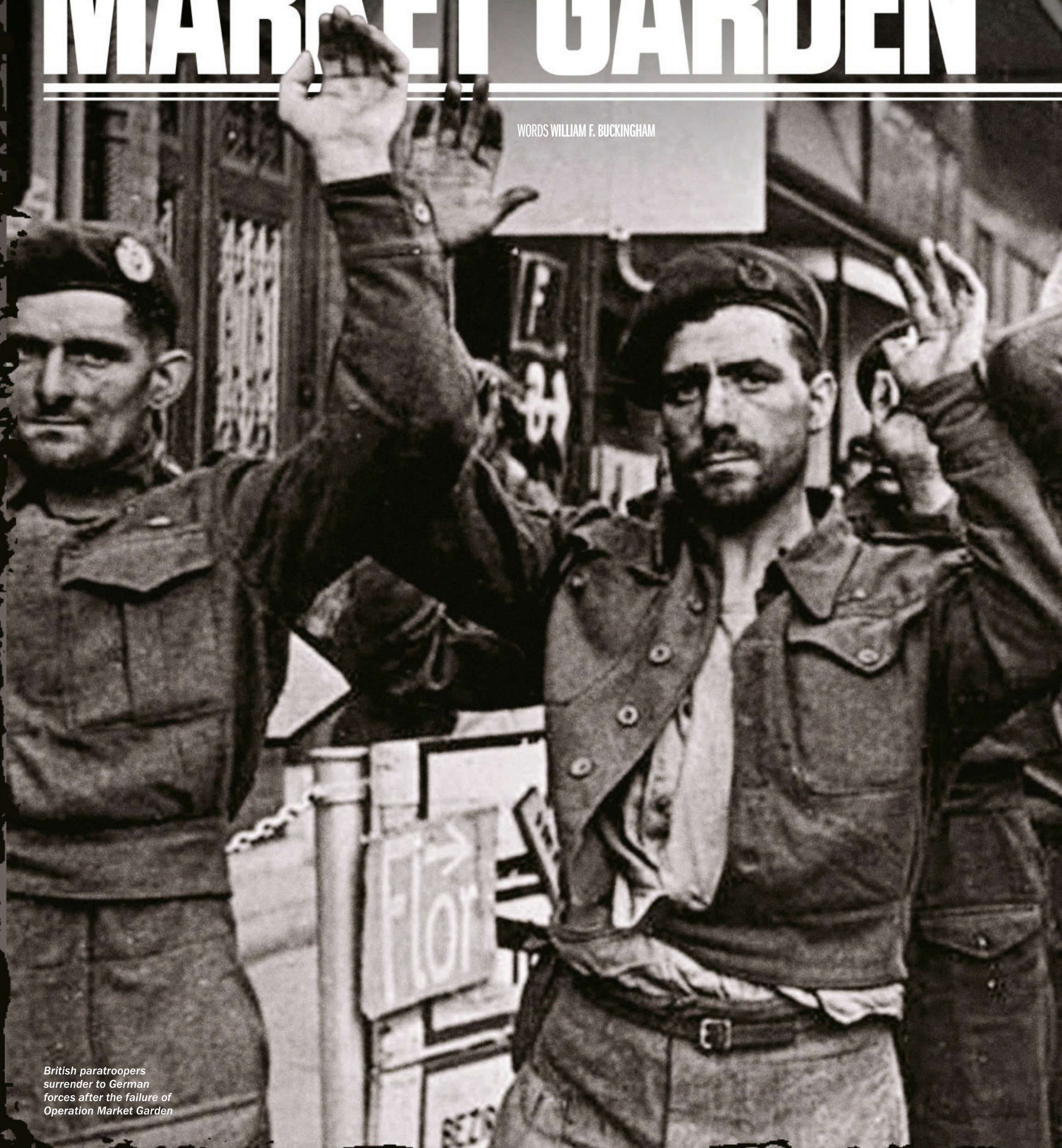
Mago deliberately dispersed his army in several towns to avoid directly confronting the Romans but a battle was eventually fought at Ilipa in 206. Mago lost this important engagement and Carthage's control over Iberia was irreparably damaged. He failed to recapture Cartagena and Gades (Cádiz) but he did attack the Balearic Islands and even carried the war into northwest Italy in 205. He was finally defeated and mortally wounded in battle at Cisalpine Gaul two years later.



The Menorcan capital of Mahón is named after Mago and he also inadvertently gave his name to the city's popular egg sauce: mayonnaise

MARKET GARDEN

WORDS WILLIAM F. BUCKINGHAM



*British paratroopers
surrender to German
forces after the failure of
Operation Market Garden*

INSIDE THE 1ST AIRBORNE DIVISION'S FAILURE AT ARNHEM

For 75 years the underlying reasons for the failure at Arnhem have gone largely unremarked upon, despite being in plain sight

The Battle of Normandy effectively ended on 21 August 1944 with the closing of the Falaise Gap, 76 days after Allied troops first set foot on the D-Day landing beaches.

The battle cost the Germans around 10,000 dead and 50,000 prisoners along with almost all their heavy equipment and vehicles, and an estimated tide of 20,000 survivors fled eastward as far as southern Holland, where the local civilians dubbed Tuesday 5 September 'Dolle Dinsdag' or 'Mad Tuesday'.

The Allied pursuit began on 28 August with British tanks reaching Arras on 1 September, Brussels was liberated two days later and by 6 September the advance was approaching the Dutch border in the face of stiffening German resistance. In an effort to maintain the momentum Allied Supreme Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower authorised Operation Market Garden, which was intended to bypass the Westwall fixed defences guarding the German frontier and open a route into the North German Plain and thus the heart of the Third Reich.

Operation Market was the largest airborne operation in history and involved landing 40,000 men from three Allied Airborne Divisions along a 60-mile corridor running north from the Belgian border to the Dutch city of Arnhem on the Lower Rhine, tasked to seize and hold 17 bridges across eight separate waterways starting at the Wilhelmina Canal just north of Eindhoven. The operation began on 17 September 1944 with the US 101st Airborne Division assigned to secure the southern third of the corridor, the centre portion including the city of Nijmegen was the responsibility of the US 82nd Airborne Division and the furthest third was allotted to the British 1st Airborne Division.

The ground component of the Operation, codenamed Garden, tasked British 30 Corps – spearheaded by the Guards Armoured Division – to break through the coalescing German defence on the Belgian border and advance rapidly up the Airborne Corridor, relieving each crossing in turn. All this was scheduled to take a perhaps optimistic 48 hours. In the event the two US Airborne divisions secured all their allotted objectives, although the first bridge across the Wilhelmina Canal was destroyed, prompting a 36-hour delay compounded by the tardy performance of 30 Corps, while the road and rail bridges across the River Waal at Nijmegen were not secured until the evening of 20 September, 24 hours behind schedule.

Matters went most awry at Arnhem however, despite a near flawless delivery. The 1st Airborne Division's plan was to despatch the 1st Airborne Reconnaissance Squadron and the



Image: Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-S73820 / CC-BY-SA 3.0

1st Parachute Brigade to secure the objectives in Arnhem. The bulk of the first lift would remain at the landing area until the second lift arrived the following day, after which the entire division would also move into Arnhem.

In the event only a small part of the 1st Parachute Brigade managed to slip through to the north end of the Arnhem road bridge, where they held the objective for 80 rather than 48 hours before being overwhelmed after an epic siege. The remainder of the 1st Parachute Brigade fought itself to destruction trying to reach the bridge before being driven back to the main body of the 1st Airborne Division, which was blocked and surrounded at Oosterbeek, midway between the landing area and Arnhem.

After another epic six-day siege that reduced Oosterbeek to rubble and the failure of three attempts to push reinforcements across the Lower Rhine, around 2,500 survivors were evacuated in small boats on the night of 25-26 September 1944. The evacuation effectively marked the end of Operation Market Garden.

Popular reasons for the failure

The search for reasons and outright excuses for the 1st Airborne Division's failure at Arnhem began virtually the moment Market Garden ended, and several recurring favourites have emerged over the years. These include: landing the division in daylight, spreading the division landing across three lifts on successive days, and the seven mile or so distance between the landing area and Arnhem. All of these were mandated by external factors however, and they did not impact adversely on events at Arnhem.

First, because Market was launched in a no-moon period, a daylight insertion was unavoidable because paratroopers and glider pilots alike required a degree of natural light to judge depth and distance for landing. It should also be noted that the Market first lift was

"THE REMAINDER OF THE 1ST PARACHUTE BRIGADE FOUGHT ITSELF TO DESTRUCTION TRYING TO REACH THE BRIDGE"

widely hailed as the most successful to date by experienced commanders from all three Airborne Divisions.

Second, the 1st Airborne was not alone in being delivered in multiple lifts spread over several days simply because there were insufficient transport aircraft available to deliver three complete Airborne divisions simultaneously. The shortening autumn days ruled out flying more than one lift per day because it would involve taking off or returning in darkness, and while RAF aircrew were trained in night flying and navigation techniques, their USAAF counterparts largely were not and also lacked trained navigators and ground crew.

Third, the landing area was selected because it was the closest site to Arnhem suitable for large-scale glider landings, as contemporary maps show. While the area at the south end of the Arnhem road bridge could have been used as a parachute landing zone, the planners considered it too soft and riven with deep, wide drainage ditches for safe use by heavily laden gliders. Furthermore, the distance between the landing area and the objectives in Arnhem was not the handicap it is often painted. The 2nd Parachute Battalion reached the Arnhem road bridge in just over four hours, fighting several small actions en route and while shepherding a number of personnel and vehicles from the Brigade column and a variety of support units. This shows covering the seven miles was perfectly feasible providing the attackers moved with sufficient speed and application.

The myth of enemy action

Enemy action is another often repeated reason for the failure, usually relying on two specific examples. SS Bataillon Krafft, an approximately 400-strong replacement training unit billeted near Oosterbeek, is routinely credited with single-handedly holding back the 1st Parachute Brigade's advance to Arnhem until after dark on 17 September, largely due to a highly embellished and self-serving report by its commander, Hauptsturmführer Sepp Krafft.

The reality was rather more prosaic. Krafft serendipitously deployed his unit along the eastern side of what was to be the 1st Airborne Division's main landing area to avoid Allied preparatory bombing, but its impact was far less than popularly claimed, amounting to a handful of relatively minor clashes. One element was wiped out by the 2nd Parachute Battalion after straying onto the landing area, another spent several hours inconclusively skirmishing with a British unit defending the landing area and a third caught two of the 1st Airborne Reconnaissance Squadron's Jeeps as they belatedly began their move from the landing area to the Arnhem bridge.

The most significant clashes were with the 3rd Parachute Battalion on the outskirts of Oosterbeek, consisting of a brief hit-and-run ambush in the late afternoon followed by an inconclusive two-hour fight with the tail end of the 3rd Battalion column at dusk that ended when the SS element withdrew. None of this materially impacted the 1st Parachute Brigade's advance toward Arnhem however, and any connected consequences were attributable to other factors.

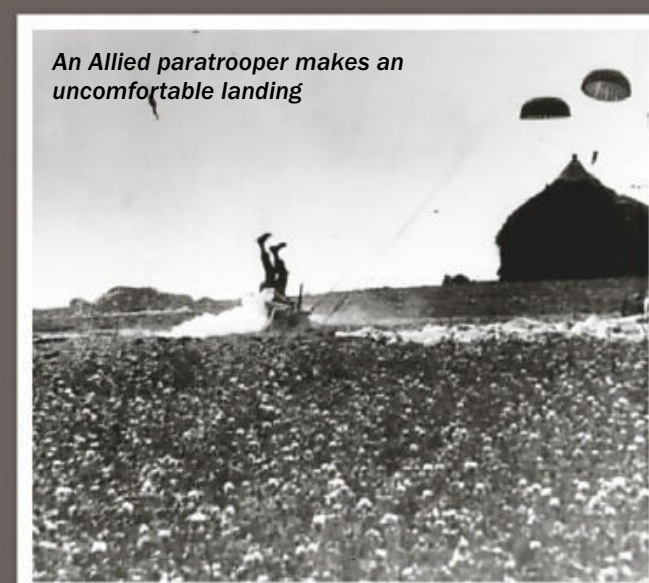
The second popular myth with reference to enemy action is the recurring idea that the 1st Airborne Division landed atop two fully functioning panzer divisions. While II SS Panzerkorps, consisting of 9 and 10 SS Panzer Divisions, had been in the



British paratroops of the 1st Airborne Division in their aircraft en route to Arnhem



At the time, Market was the largest airborne operation in history



An Allied paratrooper makes an uncomfortable landing



Map: Battlefield Design



Dutch citizens welcome a British Sherman tank on 21 September

Tanks of 2nd Welsh Guards crossing the bridge at Nijmegen,



vicinity of Arnhem since 8 September, the fighting in Normandy and the retreat across northern France and Belgium had reduced them to a fraction of a single division in total, with a relative handful of vehicles and heavy equipment, the bulk of which were despatched south to Belgium to block the Allied ground advance on 13 September, four days before Market commenced.

By 17 September, 10 SS Panzer Division had been ordered to refit in place in Holland at three locations up to 30 miles east and north of Arnhem, while 9 SS Panzer Division had been ordered to hand over its surviving heavy equipment to its running mate and the bulk of its personnel had already been despatched to Germany by rail to be re-equipped by the time Market began. The remainder, mainly service and supply personnel denuded of almost all heavy equipment and motor transport, were scattered across locations north and east of Arnhem between 16 and 35 miles from the landing area.

It is therefore clear that neither of II SS Panzerkorps' badly depleted formations were close to being under the 1st Airborne Division's landing and more importantly, none of 9 SS Panzer Division's elements were located between the landing area and Arnhem. They were therefore unable to seriously interfere with the 1st Parachute Brigade's advance into Arnhem in the first vital ten to 12 hours immediately following the landing, when the British formation's battle for its objectives was won and lost.

Apart from the riverside loophole that permitted the 2nd Parachute Battalion to slip through to the Arnhem road bridge, German reactions and deployments were exemplary,

however. II SS Panzerkorps HQ issued warning orders less than an hour after receiving reports of the landing, 9 SS Panzer Division's denuded units were on the way to the scene of the action within three hours and within four hours Feldmarschall Walther Model had issued orders that framed the subsequent successful German conduct of the battle.

Unwarranted arrogance and poor discipline?

All this suggests that the reasons for the 1st Airborne Division's failure at Arnhem were a little closer to home, and at first glance the problems appear to be with the division's attitude as a whole. Although the glider and parachute operations carried out by two of its constituent brigades in Sicily were effectively fiascos, the 1st Airborne Division returned from the Mediterranean in November 1943 with an overwhelming sense of its experience and capabilities; tendencies noted not least by the division's new commander Major-General Robert Urquhart, who observed a reluctance to accept the necessity of any additional training.

Similarly, Lieutenant-Colonel Mark Henniker from the division's Royal Engineer contingent referred to many surrounding themselves with a mystique that was not entirely justified by experience while Major Philip Tower RA, who joined the division after its return to the UK, recognised the quality of his new Airborne comrades but felt they overestimated their abilities, and noted an unwillingness to acknowledge that any worthwhile experience was to be had outside the Airborne fold. This is illustrated by an incident when umpires ruled against a particularly poorly co-ordinated attack

by a 1st Airborne Division unit during Exercise Mush in April 1944, after which a company commander protested loudly that "you can't do this to us, we are the original Red Devils!"

The attitude manifested itself as indiscipline in the lower ranks, particularly within the 1st Parachute Brigade. Lieutenant-Colonel John Frost, who commanded the 2nd Parachute Battalion at Arnhem bridge, referred to low level disciplinary problems across the whole brigade from 'hard cases' disinclined to obey regulations, along with widespread absenteeism which interfered with training and disrupted unit cohesion, while the commander of the 3rd Parachute Battalion was relieved after his Battalion was unable to march on a test exercise.

The epicentre of indiscipline was the 1st Parachute Battalion where one commander was posted away after tightening discipline with the aid of a Guards RSM, which the troops considered to be "treating battle hardened men like children" and his replacement was not popular either. The feeling was mutual. Lieutenant-Colonel Kenneth Darling later recalled, "Frankly, I was horrified by 1 Para, they thought they knew all the answers, which they did not, and their discipline was not what I expected." The upshot was a mutiny on 30 March 1944 when the Battalion refused to draw parachutes for a jump which led to Darling being replaced by Lieutenant-Colonel David Dobie, who led the 1st Battalion into Arnhem. In some instances the indiscipline spilled over into outright criminality. For example, on 12 February 1944 the local fire brigade had to be summoned after a smoke marker was ignited outside the Battalion Orderly Room, and just over a month later the safe in the Battalion's NAAFI canteen was broken into and the funds stolen.

The obvious conclusion to draw from all this was that unwarranted arrogance and poor discipline were the reasons for the 1st Airborne Division's failure. However, events in Holland clearly show this was not the case. With regard to the 1st Parachute Brigade, the 2nd Parachute Battalion reached the Arnhem road

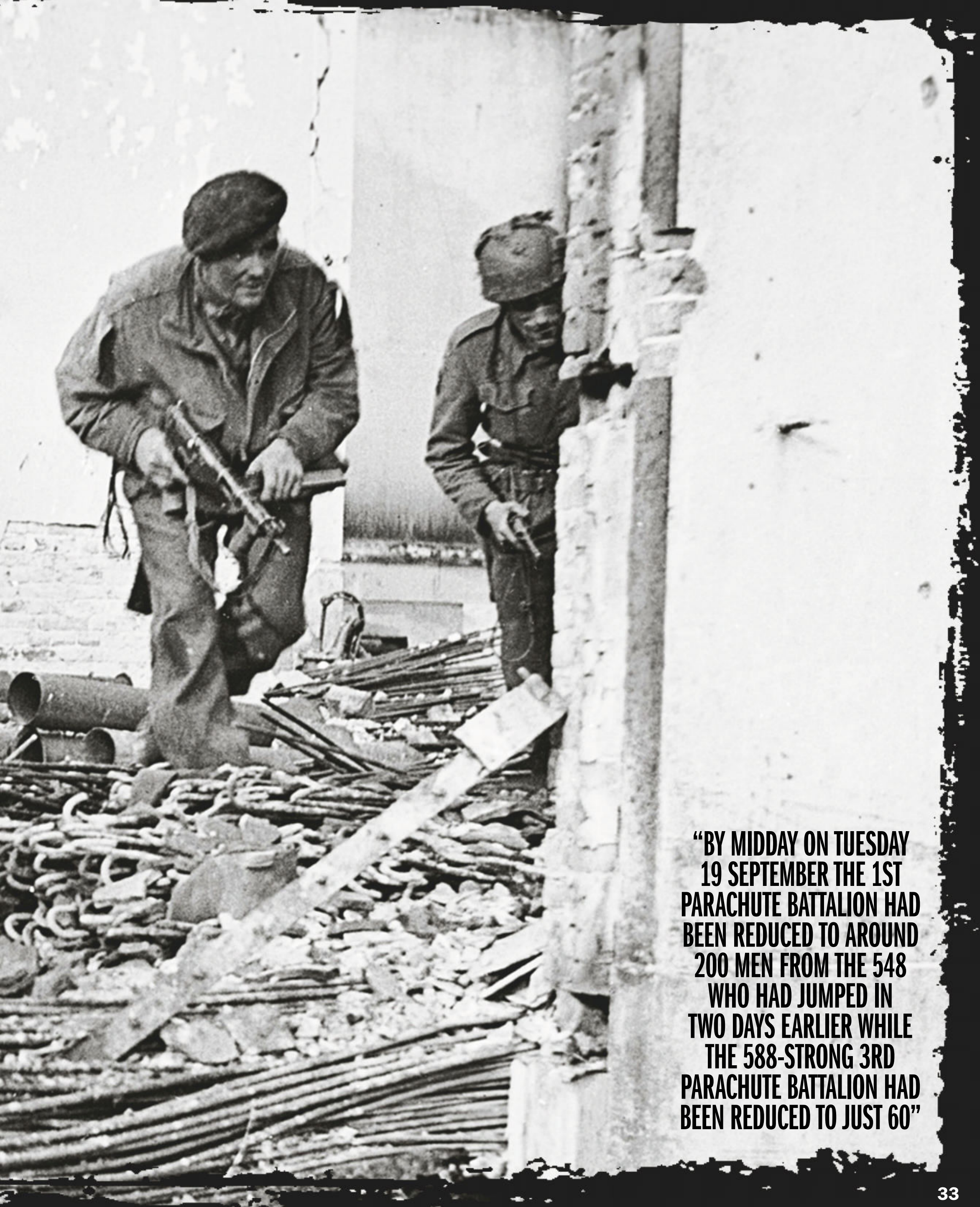
"THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE REASONS FOR THE 1ST AIRBORNE DIVISION'S FAILURE AT ARNHEM WERE A LITTLE CLOSER TO HOME, AND AT FIRST GLANCE THE PROBLEMS APPEAR TO BE WITH THE DIVISION'S ATTITUDE AS A WHOLE"

Lieutenant-General Lewis H. Brereton (Left) commander of the First Allied Airborne Army, shakes hands with Major-General Urquhart



British paratroopers pick their way through the ruins of a building in Oosterbeek, to where the Allied forces had retreated





**“BY MIDDAY ON TUESDAY
19 SEPTEMBER THE 1ST
PARACHUTE BATTALION HAD
BEEN REDUCED TO AROUND
200 MEN FROM THE 548
WHO HAD JUMPED IN
TWO DAYS EARLIER WHILE
THE 588-STRONG 3RD
PARACHUTE BATTALION HAD
BEEN REDUCED TO JUST 60”**

bridge in just over four hours accompanied by the brigade column and other elements totalling approximately 740 men.

This force held the north end of the bridge for three and a half days, losing 81 dead and approximately 280 wounded in the process, almost 50 per cent of the force. They were only overwhelmed after running out of ammunition and food, and being literally blasted out of mostly burning buildings by artillery and tanks.

The 1st Parachute Battalion spent 11 hours trying to reach its objective north of Arnhem, losing 11 dead and over a hundred wounded, before moving immediately to reinforce Frost at the road bridge. It then joined the 3rd Parachute Battalion in repeated unsuccessful attempts to break through the German blocking line in the western outskirts of Arnhem, during which both units fought themselves virtually to destruction. By midday on Tuesday 19 September the 1st Parachute Battalion had been reduced to around 200 men from the 548 who had jumped in two days earlier, while the 588-strong 3rd Parachute Battalion had been reduced to just 60.

Neither was this level of raw courage and application unique to the 1st Parachute Brigade, as the fight in the outskirts of Arnhem took a similar toll of battalions from the 1st Airlanding Brigade and 4th Parachute Brigade and was then replicated across the entire gamut of the 1st Airborne Division's units in the subsequent six-day siege of Oosterbeek. This all strongly suggests that the 1st Parachute Brigade's indiscipline was largely a case of good field soldiers making poor garrison soldiers, and that there was little wrong with

the 1st Airborne Division up to the battalion level or equivalent, arrogance notwithstanding.

Poor planning and leadership

In fact, the root of the 1st Airborne Division's failure was higher up the chain of command, and at the very top. A Regular officer commissioned in 1920, Major-General Robert Elliot Urquhart assumed command the 1st Airborne Division on 10 January 1944, having risen from the rank of major to major-general in the course of war service in a variety of staff positions, including a 13-month stint on the staff of the 51st Highland Division in North Africa. This was followed by his sole operational command appointment, four months commanding 231 Infantry Brigade in Sicily and southern Italy; he never commanded or served with an airborne unit prior to assuming command of the 1st Airborne Division.

His relatively rapid progress and elevation to the latter command over better-qualified candidates was due to the intervention of Field-Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery. Urquhart had been a Montgomery protégé since coming to the latter's notice when serving on the 3rd Infantry Division staff in October 1940, and he was given command of the 1st Airborne Division after Montgomery raised the idea with the commander of British 1st Airborne Corps, Major-General Frederick Browning. To be fair there is no evidence Urquhart sought the appointment and he created a good impression at his new command, but circumstances conspired to prevent him properly grasping the operational implications, restrictions and realities of his new role.

In the five months before D-Day, Urquhart attended numerous conferences and planning meetings in or near London over a hundred miles from his HQ in Lincolnshire and after the invasion he was fully involved in preparing for a total of 15 cancelled operations. This was a punishing schedule and was likely a cause of the severe bout of malaria that hospitalised him for almost a month in April 1944. Urquhart's lack of airborne experience was clearly apparent in his planning for Arnhem, which elicited disbelief among senior US Airborne commanders. For example, Brigadier-General James Gavin, commanding the 82nd Airborne Division and the most experienced of all Allied airborne commanders, later likened Urquhart's scheme to a peacetime exercise.

Urquhart gave assembling his division in its entirety as much attention as accomplishing its mission, and his assumption that the Germans would permit it to sit in place for 24 hours before moving into Arnhem was fanciful, as the fact that the bulk of the 1st Airborne Division covered less than half the distance to Arnhem before being blocked and surrounded shows. Urquhart's thinking appears to have been rooted in conventional ground operation rather than what was required for an airborne insertion 60 miles behind enemy lines, and thus suggests a fundamental misunderstanding of the realities of airborne operations.

Urquhart compounded his unrealistic planning with a series of poor decisions after Market was launched, to the extent it can be argued he did not make a single correct decision in his first two days on the ground in Holland. He failed to clarify the division

Among the criticisms of the operation is the tasking of airborne troops in regular infantry roles



command succession until boarding the glider for Arnhem, a basic precaution and a vital one in airborne operations, given the routine risks inherent in aerial delivery even without enemy action. In the event his chief of staff was obliged to mitigate the consequences with diplomacy in the midst of the battle when Urquhart abruptly left his HQ shortly after landing in response to an erroneous rumour that the 1st Airborne Reconnaissance Squadron had failed to arrive in Holland.

Instead of checking the veracity of the rumour, Urquhart summoned the Squadron Commander, Major Freddie Gough, to Division HQ by radio before racing off in a Jeep to inform Brigadier Lathbury and the 1st Parachute Brigade in person. The kneejerk summons separated Gough from his command for the remainder of the battle and effectively ended the squadron's coup-de-main mission.

More seriously, it can be argued that at this point Urquhart effectively abdicated command of the 1st Airborne Division as he disappeared with no explanation or contact arrangements and then deliberately severed radio contact with his HQ, which was never re-established. His arrival at the 3rd Parachute Battalion at dusk was instrumental in that unit abandoning its move to Arnhem and halting in Oosterbeek for the night. Urquhart then chose to remain with the 3rd Battalion, still out of contact with his HQ and the rest of the division, and thus unable to exert any influence on the developing battle, until the late afternoon of 18 September. He then made an ill-advised attempt to regain his HQ accompanied by Brigadier Gerald Lathbury that ended with Lathbury being badly wounded

“URQUHART’S LACK OF AIRBORNE EXPERIENCE WAS CLEARLY APPARENT IN HIS PLANNING FOR ARNHEM, WHICH ELICITED DISBELIEF AMONG SENIOR US AIRBORNE COMMANDERS”

and captured and Urquhart trapped in an attic for 12 hours, before finally regaining his HQ at 7:25am on 19 September, after a 40-hour absence. By that time the initial window of opportunity had gone and the Arnhem portion of Operation Market had effectively failed.

That is not to say that Urquhart was a bad or incompetent commander. He did a more than adequate job of rallying his division and establishing a defensible perimeter at Oosterbeek while in contact with the enemy, and then orchestrated the defence of that perimeter under ever increasing German pressure. When it became clear this was unsustainable and permission was granted to withdraw across the river, Urquhart planned and implemented an evacuation inspired by the retreat from Gallipoli during the First World War codenamed Operation Berlin, which succeeded in lifting over 2,000 men across the Lower Rhine on the night of 25-26 September. All that came after the airborne assault at Arnhem had

morphed into a conventional defensive infantry battle however, and the evidence strongly suggests that Urquhart did not fully grasp the realities of airborne operations.

That lack of understanding contributed significantly to the failure of the 1st Airborne Division at Arnhem and, by extension, to the failure of Operation Market Garden.

The Arnhem portion of Market might still have succeeded in spite of Urquhart's errors had the 1st Parachute Brigade managed to seize and hold the objectives in the city. This was not to be however, as the Brigade commander was only marginally more experienced himself. Brigadier Gerald Lathbury was commissioned in 1926 and his war service consisted of a number of separate staff appointments at the War Office, interspersed with eight months overseeing the raising of the 3rd Parachute Battalion and subsequently four months performing the same role with the 3rd Parachute Brigade.

He assumed command of the 1st Parachute Brigade on 25 April 1943 and led its operation to seize the Primasole Bridge in Sicily three months later. The operation was a fiasco as the Brigade was scattered up to 20 miles from its objective, the ground force took 48 rather than 12 hours to arrive and Lathbury was wounded in the back and legs during the fighting. These circumstances have concealed the unsuitability of Lathbury's plan however, which employed six widely separated landing zones before dispersing the Brigade over three separate locations spread across more than five square miles. This ruled out mutual support and breached the military maxim on maintaining

American troops attempt to free trapped GIs from the wreckage of a crash-landed Waco glider



A British officer is captured in civilian clothes by Waffen-SS soldiers



This photograph was taken by Luftwaffe German Luftwaffe war correspondent Lieutenant Helmuth Pirath near Rijnbrug



focus on the primary aim. In fairness, there was not a great deal of airborne experience to draw upon in 1943, but Lathbury went on to commit exactly the same errors at Arnhem where again circumstances conspired to conceal the fact.

Lathbury's Arnhem plan was a slight reworking of an earlier scheme codenamed Comet and envisaged sending the armed Jeeps of the 1st Airborne Reconnaissance Squadron ahead to seize the Arnhem bridge followed by the Brigade's three battalions moving along three parallel and widely spaced routes. The 1st Parachute Battalion was allotted the northern route codenamed Leopard, the 3rd Parachute Battalion was assigned the centre Tiger route and the 2nd Parachute Battalion was allocated the southern Lion route along the Lower Rhine. This dispersed the Brigade's combat power, ruled out mutual support and obliged each battalion to fight in isolation and the plan thus resembled a peacetime training exercise, an impression reinforced by the objectives selected. These isolated a third of the brigade on high ground north of Arnhem, dispersed a third across the pontoon bridge, the Arnhem rail bridge and the German HQ in the centre of Arnhem with the remaining third holding the Arnhem road bridge.

Given that most of these tasks required a full battalion at minimum, the plan was a classic case of trying to do too much with too little, and virtually guaranteed that the 1st Parachute Brigade's sub-units would be isolated, overwhelmed and defeated in detail.

Once on the ground in Holland, Lathbury exacerbated the flaws in his plan by

micromanaging his subordinate commanders to a degree that interfered with their ability to carry out their assigned missions. This began by needlessly holding the battalions at the landing area for over an hour before releasing them despite the time sensitive nature of the operation, and then motoring between the widely dispersed Battalion routes urging the commanders to greater haste.

By early evening Lathbury was running the 3rd Parachute Battalion over the head of its commander near Oosterbeek. He ordered an unnecessary counter-attack against elements of Bataillon Krafft that fired on the tail of the battalion column as it was moving away from the attackers and then compounded this by ordering the 3rd Battalion to halt in Oosterbeek for the night, presumably to protect Major-General Urquhart after he

turned up unescorted at dusk. Lathbury then refused a radio appeal for assistance from his brigade major at the Arnhem road bridge, on the grounds that his men were tired.

Thereafter he effectively abdicated command by accompanying an equally passive Urquhart in remaining with the 3rd Parachute Battalion until he was wounded and captured while attempting to regain his HQ on 18 September. All this does not necessarily mean Lathbury was a bad or incompetent officer. His inadequate planning was attributable to inexperience and lack of higher guidance. His micromanaging was presumably due to his formation's disciplinary problems, and abandoning his mission to protect his superior was likely the result of his conditioning as a Regular officer. Nonetheless, it is perhaps instructive to note that the elements of the 1st Parachute Brigade that reached the Arnhem road bridge or fought themselves to destruction trying to reach it did so without the benefit of Lathbury's direct involvement.

It can therefore be seen that there was more to the failure of the 1st Airborne Division at Arnhem than popular assumptions about landing areas, drop arrangements and enemy action, and that the underlying reasons were poor planning and leadership at the brigade and division level. Given the exemplary courage and tenacity exhibited by the men of the 1st Airborne Division in Holland, it is interesting to speculate on how the Arnhem portion of Operation Market might have turned out with more experienced hands at the helm.

“THE PLAN WAS A CLASSIC CASE OF TRYING TO DO TOO MUCH WITH TOO LITTLE, AND VIRTUALLY GUARANTEED THAT THE 1ST PARACHUTE BRIGADE’S SUB-UNITS WOULD BE ISOLATED, OVERWHELMED AND DEFEATED”

Images: Alamy, Getty, Shutterstock



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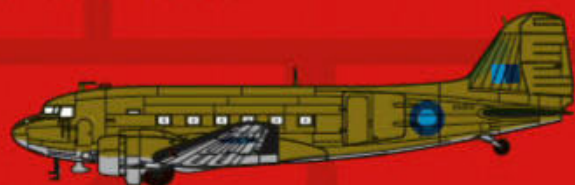
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Douglas Dakota Mk.III™ & Willys Jeep

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Total pieces of the three 71

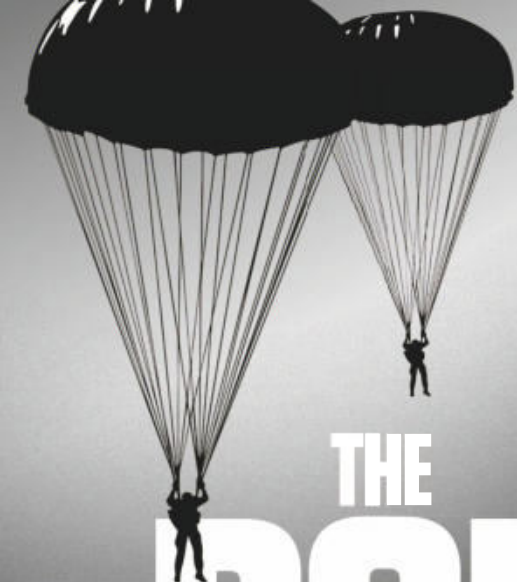


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THE POLISH AIRBORNE AT ARNHEM

Fighting alongside their British comrades-in-arms during the ill-fated operation was Stanislaw Sosabowski's 1st Independent Polish Parachute Brigade

WORDS MARIANNA BUKOWSKI

***Inset, top:** Major General Stanislaw Sosabowski, "I decided to try and perform a miracle. I made my mind up to form a Polish Parachute Brigade"*

***The Polish Brigade** underwent intense paratrooper training in Scotland*



The 1st Polish Parachute Brigade was, in the words of its commander Major General Stanislaw Sosabowski, “An Army bastard, born out of wedlock, unwanted and with most of the qualities and faults of a love-child – strength, stubbornness and determination.” Although it then stood at fewer than 2,000 men, General Wladyslaw Sikorski, Commander of the Free Polish Forces, officially announced the Brigade was formed in Scotland on 23 September 1941.

Like all Polish fighting units in the west, the brigade was primarily composed of Polish officers and men, who following the invasion of Poland had managed the most extraordinary journeys and daring escapes before ever reaching Britain. Yet unlike the Polish Army, Navy and Air force, which were all placed under Supreme Allied Command, the Brigade held a unique position in that it was the only Polish formation under the direct control of the Polish Commander-in-Chief. Kept in reserve by the Polish Government, the Brigade’s purpose was to be used in the liberation of Poland, where, since the early days of the German occupation, plans for national uprising were being made. The Brigade’s motto was ‘The Shortest Way’ and all its men were awaiting the day when they would drop from the skies to liberate Warsaw. “It was the ambition of all us exiles to get back and fight for the freedom of our country. We felt guilty being in Scotland,” wrote Sosabowski.

Until that day came, all their focus went into training and the morale of the Brigade was very high. Seeing them in training, one American soldier described them as “killers under the silk”. Stationed in Scotland, and headquartered at Largo House, or ‘A Hell on Earth’ as the stately home was called by some of the soldiers. They had a jump tower and a purpose built assault course nicknamed ‘The Monkey Grove’. The training was very demanding

but Sosabowski, who was 50 years old at the time, was known for never asking his soldiers for anything he was not prepared to do himself. In Major General Urquhart’s account of Arnhem, he writes of Sosabowski’s naturally courteous manner being violently contrasted with sudden outbursts in speech and temper. However, this “character with a vengeance” in the words of Urquhart “not only had the affection of his men, but was tremendously respected by all those who served with him”. Coming to Scotland in March 1944 on his pre-invasion tour of all fighting units, Field Marshal Montgomery took an interest in Sosabowski’s Brigade,

“You have first class soldiers – they will kill everybody,” said Montgomery. “No, sir, enemies only,” came Sosabowski’s humorous riposte.

Major-General Fredrick ‘Boy’ Browning, the later Allied Airborne Corps Commander, also took a keen interest in the Brigade and suggestions began of using it for various Allied operations, before reverting it back to Polish command. Sosabowski, acutely aware that “when a reserve unit is put into battle, it is normally thrown in where the fighting is heaviest”, fought hard for the unit to “remain independent and not lose its identity in the midst of British formations”. This was a distinction of utmost importance not only for the soldiers of the Brigade but above all, for Poland.

Nevertheless, all diplomatic exchanges were brushed aside as pressure mounted with the Normandy landings. Montgomery would not, understandably, take the Polish Parachute Brigade with strings attached, and Poland’s new Supreme Commander, General Sosnkowski, agreed to place the Brigade at the disposal of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces. Ending his letter in the hopes that Montgomery would take into account the difficulties in obtaining replacements and the importance of this Brigade for Poland, Sosnkowski wrote, “We

are confident that the British Chiefs of Staff will do all in their power to facilitate at the right moment the employment of the Brigade in support of the rising in Poland, particularly in securing air transport for this purpose.”

The practical possibility and political will of Britain to supply aircraft in support of a large operation in Poland has been argued since, yet either way, it was not to be. Some six weeks after being put under British command, the call that Sosabowski and his men had all been living for finally came. On 25 July General ‘Bor’ Komorowski, Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Home Army sent the telegram, “We are ready to start fighting for Warsaw. The arrival of the Parachute Brigade will be of important military and political value. Please arrange for the airfields in Warsaw to be bombed. I shall report when we start.” The telegram was left unanswered. It was too late.

As Polish parachutists would later fall from the skies at Arnhem, Warsaw would already be raging in the heroic but ultimately doomed 63-day battle. “Can you imagine our bitterness and our inner defeat?” Sosabowski wrote after the war.

“No picnic”

His parachute Brigade no longer independent, Sosabowski soon discovered the dynamic between Browning and himself had dramatically changed. In fact, the gulf between Sosabowski and the British Generals would grow wider rapidly, to devastating effect. Briefings for different operations soon followed, one swiftly replaced by another. “Someone, somewhere, with a vivid imagination, optimism and little knowledge, was producing parachute battle orders with the same frequency and ease as a conjuror producing rabbits from a top hat,” wrote Sosabowski. In total, some 15 different plans were briefed before operation Market Garden was set for the 17 September, leaving

“AN ARMY BASTARD, BORN OUT OF WEDLOCK, UNWANTED AND WITH MOST OF THE QUALITIES AND FAULTS OF A LOVE-CHILD”

Sosabowski claimed “it was the ambition of all us exiles to get back and fight for the freedom of our country”



Clement Attlee visiting troops of the Polish Parachute Brigade at Cupar, April 1942



THE POLISH AIRBORNE AT ARNHEM

only five days to prepare and launch the operation, which according to Montgomery, was to bring the war to a victorious end in 1944.

Five days noted Sosabowski “is a very short time to teach private soldiers a new battle plan, in which they, as paratroopers, are required to know a lot more than normal soldiers in order to be able to act on their own initiative”. Adding to the difficulty, Sosabowski’s Brigade Group was split up to fly out on different days in completely separate parties.

The anti-tank battery was to travel by glider lift on ‘D-Day plus One and Two’ with the 1st Air Landing Brigade, and land on the north bank of the river, whilst the main Polish Brigade group was to land on the south bank of the Neder Rhine in the area of Elden, about one mile south of Arnhem. “I knew in the initial stages I would be without most of my heavy guns and ammunition reserves, and we would not join up with them until we had crossed the Rhine,” wrote Sosabowski.

The immediate task of the main part of the Polish Brigade that was landing in the south was to cross the bridges, which according to Urquhart’s plan would by then be in the hands of the 1st Parachute Brigade, and dig in on the eastern edge of Arnhem. “If by any chance the 1st Brigade has not taken the bridges, you will have to capture them on the way through,” Urquhart ordered Sosabowski. Dividing his Brigade into three battalion combat groups, Sosabowski planned for them to drop and fight together whilst focusing on different tasks.

The first group was to capture the Arnhem Bridge and cross the river to the eastern outskirt of Arnhem. The second would provide covering fire and capture a pontoon bridge, whilst the third group would be destroying anti-aircraft and searchlight units and organise the ferry west of the main bridge to get men and equipment across. Each group was provided with their own signals equipment, medical supplies, medium machine guns, explosives and mines.

“It must be remembered that the Germans were in retreat but they were nothing like beaten ... realising why we were there, they would have fought like rats to get away from the ever tightening net. As lightly equipped units, we would have faced severe odds and almost certainly suffered heavy casualties,” noted Sosabowski. With reports from the Dutch resistance of German units in the area continuously ignored by the British commanders, Sosabowski feared that the enemy was being critically underestimated.

The area around Arnhem was vital to the Germans and he expected hard and bitter fighting, worrying of the insufficient strength of the airborne to hold the landing zones and take the bridges. “The Germans would be entirely free to attack my troops as we were dropped and catch us at the weakest moment, either in the air or just after landing,” Sosabowski recalls in his memoir, *Freely I Served*. “I impressed on my commanders – and told them to impress it also on their men – this operation would not be a picnic.”

Poles apart

When the British 1st Airborne Division was dropped several miles from its objective, the main weapon of the airborne forces was lost: the element of surprise. The Polish Parachute Brigade units, arriving on the glider lift, landed on the 18 and 19 of September. The delay allowed the Germans to fight each group separately and by the time that the second group of Polish troops and anti-tank squadron arrived, the Germans had the LZ surrounded and they landed straight into fierce battle.

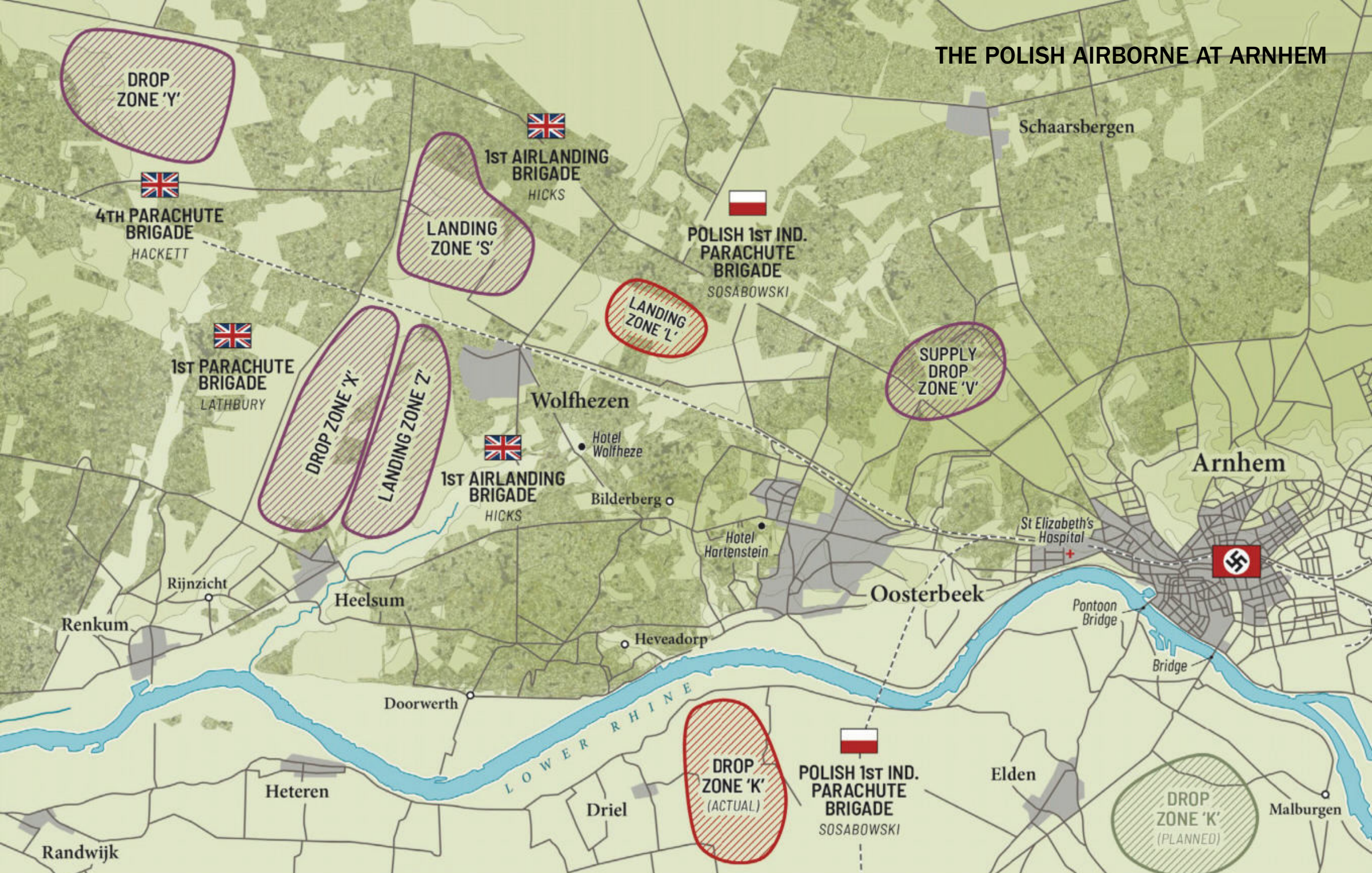
As gliders were shot to pieces, both in the air and on the ground, many were badly injured. Still in England, the main bulk of the Polish Parachute Brigade had also been delayed several times due to bad weather conditions, and only departed on 21 September. With wireless communications failing, Sosabowski only received information of the fighting in Arnhem from newspapers, “One thing I knew for certain was that the element of surprise had been lost. Time, was working in the Germans’ favour.” Last minute, the landing zone for the Polish Parachute Brigade was changed – drop-off was now some four miles off the original area near the village of Driel.

In fact, this drop was called off as well, only mid-flight, and only 41 Dakotas received the order and turned back, amongst them the 1st Battalion group, which was later dropped on 23 September. The remaining 73 aircraft continued, and were met by heavy German flak as they arrived. Sosabowski recalled the

A ‘difficult’ relationship: Major General Stanislaw Sosabowski with Major General Frederick ‘Boy’ Browning, who became the Allied Airborne Corps Commander



THE POLISH AIRBORNE AT ARNHEM



Map: Battlefield Design

immense bravery of young American pilots who “kept perfect station in spite of the sight of flaming torches of hit planes plummeting”.

Along with Sosabowski, 1,067 paratroopers were dropped, straight into an onslaught of whistling shells, bursting mortars and machine-gun fire. In Antony Beevor’s book on Arnhem, he recalls one Polish soldier seeing the moment in characteristic romantic-tragic tradition, “Those who’ve been found by a bullet also land. Their bodies float down under the white canopy slowly, majestically, as if they, too, were about to go into battle.” After some engagement with the enemy in hand-to-hand combat, the paratroopers made their way to their assembly points. At the newly set up HQ, radio contact with the 1st Division and Urquhart failed, and the absence of the 1st Parachute Battalion group caused much anxiety, but fortunately contact with the 2nd and most of the 3rd Battalion group was established. The 2nd Battalion’s route now led through the outskirts of Driel directly opposite the Heveadorp ferry. The 3rd Battalion on the right flank was directed at De Nevel, a dyke along the Neder Rhine.

The overall the situation was bad. Arnhem was in German hands and the British and some of the Polish troops, which had landed by glider, were now surrounded in Oosterbeek and engaged in heavy battle. Contact between the two Polish groups on either side of the Rhine, was established by Captain Zwolanski, who volunteered to swim across the river with a report to Sosabowski. The ferry was in German hands, however, Urquhart was sending rafts to enable the Brigade to cross to the north

“ONE THING I KNEW FOR CERTAIN WAS THAT THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE HAD BEEN LOST. TIME, WAS WORKING IN THE GERMANS’ FAVOUR”

bank to come to the aid of the 1st Division. “It was terrible to sit so impotently on the wrong side of the river, while our British comrades and some of my troops fought and died north of the river, so near and yet so far away,” recalled Sosabowski. As dawn approached, with no rafts in sight, he was forced to move the Brigade from the exposed bank and take up defensive positions, digging in at Driel. With German pressure steadily increasing and the situation north of the Rhine growing evermore critical, the 1st Division needed reinforcement of troops desperately – yet without boats, rafts or bridges how were they to make it across? With the arrival of Lieutenant-Colonel Myers, who had bravely crossed the river on a small dinghy, a plan was formed whereby using rubber dinghies, pulled backwards and forwards across the river on hawsers, some two hundred men could potentially, if unopposed, get across under the cover of darkness that coming night.

As Oosterbeek and a suburb of Arnhem was aflame in battle, war correspondent Marek Swiecicki, who was stationed with the Polish troops at the Hartenstein Hotel, remembered

how he saw fires lighting up from the south-easterly direction of Driel, from which the Polish Brigade was coming to their aid, “The Poles were passing out of one fire into another. From one blaze to another, from one rain of bullets to another.” As night fell, boats began crossing in zigzag courses to avoid German fire, yet under the blinding white light of German flares and Spandau’s spraying the river, only around 50 men would in the end manage to cross the river that night and join the Polish troops on the northern bank.

The razor’s edge

“In every action comes a crisis,” wrote Sosabowski. “At that moment, the battle can be swayed one way or the other, dependent on the luck or superior planning of either side. Victory or defeat, lie along a very thin razor edge.”

On the 23 September Browning ordered Sosabowski’s Brigade to make a second attempt at crossing the river, this time assault boats would be supplied from the 43rd Division. Sosabowski could not understand the willingness to continue sacrificing specialist airborne troops for a river assault they were not trained for, but he could do little to object, and instead requested rations and ammunition to be provided. Yet again, things did not run smoothly, nor even to plan.

The boats delivered were of a different size and their heavy weight made them difficult to carry. Being ordered to use the same launching point as the previous night was arguably reckless, and with a nearby factory suddenly bursting into flames lighting up the entire area,

it soon became a death trap under the heavy German machine-gun fire. Only one boat was launched, floating empty downstream, its former passengers all dead or wounded. While a new embarkation point was set up, it too remained under heavy fire. The cost of life and limb of this crossing attempt was very high, yet many more wounded men would have died, were it not for the exceptional dedication of Benzadrine-fuelled doctors, wearing helmets and armoured vests under their white coats. From this “inferno of shells, bombs and bullets” some 200 Polish soldiers managed to successfully cross the river, and in turn joined the house-to-house fighting in besieged Oosterbeek.

On the morning of 24 September, arriving in an armoured car, General Horrocks instructed Sosabowski to attend a new briefing later that morning with Major General Ivor Thomas in the town of Valburg. The new plan was of two river assaults: one at the sunken Heveadorp ferry by the 1st Battalion Dorsets along with one Polish Battalion, carrying supplies and medium machine guns. The second assault was to be done by rest of the Polish Brigade, attempting a third crossing at the same point as the previous two nights.

Lieutenant Dyrda’s account of The Valburg Conference and the British generals’ treatment of Sosabowski, makes for unpleasant reading. The only good news was that the Polish 1st Battalion, which Sosabowski had all this time feared to be lost, had only been delayed and was now on route to Driel. At a lunch meeting that followed Valburg, Browning told Sosabowski of his doubts in the river crossing succeeding at all and the objective having shifted on keeping the road open from Nijmegen to Eindhoven. Nevertheless, as the Polish 2nd Battalion was poised to begin their crossing that night, the operation was again delayed as no boats had been provided at the different crossing point for the Dorsets and the newly arrived Polish 1st Battalion following them. Letting the boats from the 2nd Battalion over to the Dorsets inevitably led to further delays, and as the assault was finally launched it left them exposed to another German attack. The losses were severe. Out of around 300 men fewer than 100 would return. None of the supplies, equipment or ammunition ever reached its destination.

‘Disney Silly Symphony’

On the 25 September the decision to withdraw the remnants of 1st Airborne Division was made, and the survivors of the British and Polish troops which had flown in by glider, along with those that had managed across the river on previous nights, prepared for Operation Berlin, the evacuation to the south bank that night.

The dead in battle-ravaged Oosterbeek were hastily buried, most of them in the foxholes,

trenches and shell-pits where they had fallen. The wounded were left behind to become prisoners of war. Correspondent Swiecicki, recalled how there was no shelter from the shells that “tore into the grey, huddled mass of men” as they made their way to the riverbank, and how one could see in advance where each shell would fall, “Death was flying above us, and we saw that death. It was as colourful as the picture of some fantastic legend, as some Disney *Silly Symphony*,” he wrote. With all its colours, roar, hiss and whistle, for Swiecicki this death became unusually menacing, “It deprived of strength before it killed, it paralysed before it arrived.”

Two Polish companies were ordered to act as rear-guard and cover the approaches to the river as the long files of men began evacuation to the river at around 9.30pm. Once the last survivor had passed their lines, the Polish rear-guard was to be told, to enable them to begin their own evacuation, but the order never came. At 3.00am, when there was no doubt they had

fulfilled their duty, the Polish officers in charge of the rear-guard companies ordered their men to fall back. Yet for many it was too late. Only one boat was still operating – and some 500 British troops were yet to cross. As the implication dawned on all, panic ensued.

The German rockets illuminating the area made easy targets of the men on the riverbank. The Poles and the British, some in groups, some alone, all looked for good places from which to swim across. Others, unable to swim in the strong current, turned back to hide in hope that a new opportunity to escape would come later. Of the Polish troops it is estimated that around 100 men, not including the wounded, were left behind on the north side of the river. Many died in the mud on the riverbank and it is difficult to tell how many men drowned.

No transport was arranged for the Polish paratroopers that made it to the south bank, they were only ordered to march directly to Nijmegen. Touched by their display of loyalty, Sosabowski recalled how the majority of Poles that made it across, first re-joined Brigade, before marching to Nijmegen together. This was the end of the battle at Arnhem. Out of the 1,700 Polish troops that parachuted or glided into Holland, 1,310 marched out.

Postscript

“All battles contain an element of risk, but it is the commanders’ responsibility to reduce this risk to the minimum,” noted Sosabowski. Urquhart’s use of especially trained, lightly equipped, paratroopers as infantry troops without adequate reinforcement or support was fundamentally flawed. Following the failure of Market Garden, where so many of Sosabowski’s early criticisms of the operation proved sadly correct, the subsequent attempts at shifting blame for the operation’s failure onto the Polish Parachute Brigade, were truly unjust. Browning and Horrocks’ treatment of Sosabowski was utterly disgraceful. Calling for Sosabowski’s dismissal, Browning views must have reached Montgomery, who in turn, wrote that the Polish Parachute Brigade had “fought badly” and “showed no keenness to fight”. In December 1944 Sosabowski was removed from his command.

“I only left my men physically; we were never spiritually parted,” he wrote years later. He would never again hold a major combat command and like so many of his countrymen, he was unable to return to Poland, where the newly installed communist government branded soldiers who had fought in the west as traitors.

He ended his days in London, working as a factory storeman. Yet, he was not alone in such a post-war fate. After the war, General Bor-Komorowski, commander of the Warsaw Uprising, worked as an upholsterer in London. General Stanislaw Maczek, who successfully led the 1st Polish Armoured Division in closing the Falaise Pocket, would later work as a barman in Edinburgh. In the end, Sosabowski’s only deep regret was to never be able to take his troops back to Poland and give his countrymen the freedom for which they all so valiantly fought.

“DEATH WAS FLYING ABOVE US, AND WE SAW THAT DEATH. IT WAS AS COLOURFUL AS THE PICTURE OF SOME FANTASTIC LEGEND, AS SOME DISNEY SILLY SYMPHONY”



Monument in Driel, unveiled by Sosabowski in 1961, in memory of the Polish paratroopers who fought and died during Operation Market Garden

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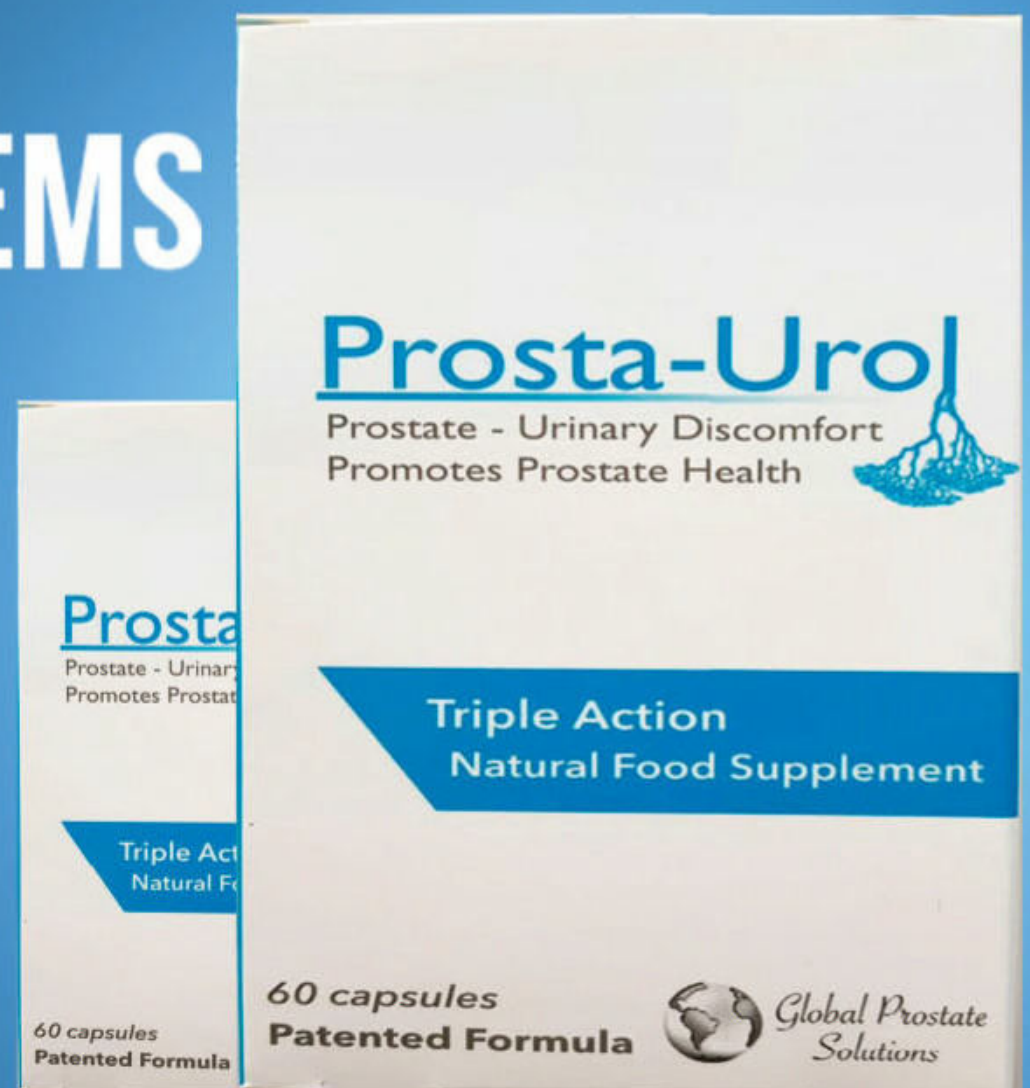
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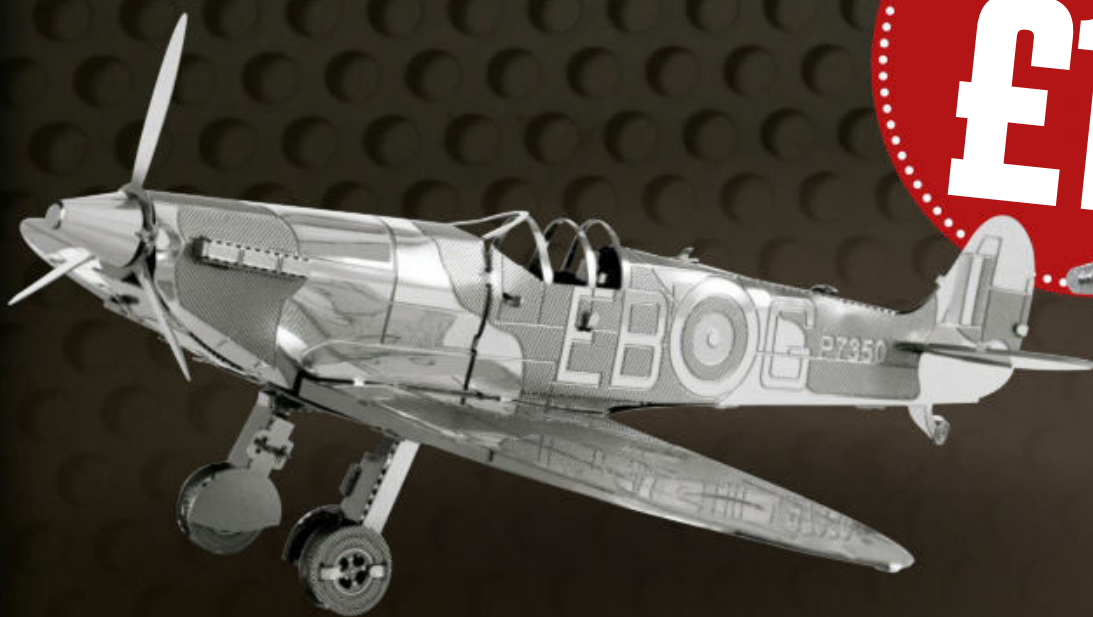
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SIEGE OF SERINGAPATAM

The capture of this fortress sealed Britain's ascendancy over southern India, and launched the military career of one of its greatest military commanders

WORDS STUART HADAWAY

In the mid-1790s, Great Britain's colonies in India were largely limited to widely separated coastal enclaves, where the East India Company (EIC) conducted trade while protected by its own armed forces. These were mainly composed of 'native' battalions, locally recruited officers and men with a smattering of white European officers in command. A small number of EIC battalions were made up of white European soldiers, many of them central European mercenaries. To reflect the growing importance to the Crown of the commercial opportunities afforded by the Indian sub-continent, greater numbers of regular British troops had begun to be sent to the various enclaves in the 1780s. Because of their status as the king's men, their officers were automatically given seniority over those of the EIC, much to resentment of the latter.

The main British enclaves were the three 'Presidencies' in Madras, Bombay, and Bengal. Each had their own governor and was largely independent of the others, although all came under the higher direction of the Governor General. With commercial profit their main aim, the EIC's troops were subject to various cost-cutting policies, such as officers often holding relatively low ranks for their actual command duties (battalions being run by majors rather than lieutenant colonels, for example), and a ban on training with live ammunition. Training in large bodies was also limited, with units being split over small garrisons to act as police forces.

Although Britain's footprint in India was small, it was slowly growing, and there had been a series of wars against the other major powers in the south of the sub-continent,

including the Maratha Confederacy and Mysore. The Marathas had been defeated after a long war in 1782, but had themselves defeated the forces of Hyderabad in 1795. This led the Nizam of Hyderabad to sign an alliance with the EIC, and this in turn gave the British a strong ally to the north of their other major threat – Mysore.

Mysore covered a huge area on the western side of southern India. It held a broad stretch of coast in the west, to the north of the Presidency of Bombay. To its east was the Presidency of Madras. It was protected on either side by two north-south running mountain ranges, the Western and Eastern Ghats. Mysore's leader, Tipu Sultan, hated the British passionately, and was developing close ties to Britain's European enemy, Revolutionary France. Mysore had fought three



A fanciful re-creation of the death of Tipu Sultan, who died in the fighting

“HIS ARTILLERY INCLUDED NOT ONLY FIELD GUNS, BUT ALSO LARGE NUMBERS OF ROCKETS. THESE WERE SMALL, INACCURATE, BUT TERRIFYING TO THE UNINITIATED AS THEY CAME SCREAMING TOWARDS THEM IN BATTLE”

wars with the EIC already. In the First Mysore War (1766-9) Tipu’s father, Hyder Ali, had invaded and defeated the Madras Presidency. The Second War (1780-4) had seen a French-backed Ali again win victories over the EIC, until the withdrawal of French support led to a peace being signed and a return to the pre-war status quo. The Third War (1790-2) had seen Tipu’s forces badly beaten and much of his territory lost. Since then, he had been working to modernise his forces and military economy with French support. Even though Tipu was an absolutist monarch, he had even paid lip-service to Revolutionary ideals to clinch this support, adopting some of the symbolism and language without actually loosening the grip of his rule. With France’s help, Tipu now had a solid, disciplined army based around

European-style infantry and artillery, and backed by a large number of traditional Indian cavalry. His artillery included not only field guns, but also large numbers of rockets. These were small, inaccurate, but terrifying to the uninitiated as they came screaming towards them in battle. Britain tightens its grip Sir Richard Wellesley, Earl of Mornington, had arrived in 1798 to take over as Governor General with a determination to expand British India, and the growing strength of Mysore gave him an obvious first target. Preparations quietly began to gather supplies and draw up plans, while diplomatic efforts were made to break the Franco-Mysore alliance. Mornington appointed Lieutenant General George Harris to command the invasion. An experienced

OPPOSING FORCES



EAST INDIA COMPANY ALLIED WITH HYDERABAD



MYSORE LEADERS: Tipu Sultan

INFANTRY: 22,000

CAVALRY: 10,000

CANNON: 300+ rockets

Below: Tipu Sultan, ‘The Tiger of Mysore’



LEADERS: Britain: General George Harris Hyderabad: Asaf Jah II, Nizam of Hyderabad

INFANTRY: Britain: 20,000 (5,000 European) Hyderabad: 10,500 (800 European)

CAVALRY: Britain: 2,800 (900 European) Hyderabad: 10,000

CANNON: Britain: 90 Hyderabad: 26

and level-headed veteran of the American War of Independence, Harris was a solid choice. In particular, he knew the importance of logistics. In this, Harris was ably supported by Colonel Sir Arthur Wellesley, Mornington's younger brother and unofficial advisor.

Wellesley had been in India since 1797, and was well versed in the importance of organisation, planning and logistics. He would play a key role in the organisation of the invasion, although his junior rank precluded him from having a command position in Harris's army. Instead, Wellesley was made adviser to, and thus de facto commander of the forces of, the Nizam of Hyderabad.

While Harris and the Nizam would advance into Mysore from the east, a third and smaller component of the army would advance from Bombay in the west, under the command of Lieutenant General James Stuart.

The invasion began in February 1799. Stuart's force of 6,500 men (half of them European) was to march from Cannanore through the friendly province of Coorg, and into the Western Ghats. Harris, with 20,000 fighting men (4,300 European) and the siege train, was to march from Vellore to the Eastern Ghats, and then north-west to Bangalore. To his north the Nizam's force of another

“THE ELEPHANTS, MADDENED BY PAIN, WERE MAKING OFF, SWINGING THEIR CHAINS ABOUT IN THE MIDST OF THE CAVALRY”

20,000 men, including six battalions of EIC infantry and the King's 33rd Foot (Wellesley's battalion), marched on a parallel course. Everything that the armies needed for the campaign was to be carried with them in a vast supply train – over 120,000 pack animals for the western forces alone.

Organised by Wellesley, he had tapped into local travelling traders known as Brinjaries to provide the largest yet cheapest force possible. Effectively, they were a vast moving bazaar that would sell the army all that it needed during the campaign.

Invasion of Mysore

Assailed from two sides, Tipu reacted by playing for time. With the monsoons due in June, he knew that the British could only stay in the field for four months. His massed irregular cavalrymen harassed the advancing

forces, especially their supply train, while at the same time clearing the land in front of them. His horsemen burned crops and drove off livestock, slowing the British advance as their pack animals suffered from lack of fresh fodder. Meanwhile, he used his interior lines of communications to strike at each of the advancing armies in turn.

Tipu's first strike was at Stuart's army. On 6 March 1799, Tipu unleashed around 12,000 men against them at Sedaseer, high in the mountains. Despite heavily outnumbering the EIC force, the cramped terrain stopped the Tipu's forces from deploying fully, and instead provided dense targets for Stuart's artillery. Even so, it took five hours of hard fighting and a final, desperate counter-attack to repel Tipu's troops. At the end of the day, Stuart's forces also had to withdraw, having used up most of their ammunition. It was unable to advance for another five days, by which time Tipu's forces had switched to the western theatre.

In the west, the Nizam and Harris had found their progress increasingly slowed by Tipu's scorched earth policy. On 19 March, an abrupt change of course was made, off the Bangalore road and heading directly to Seringapatam. This broke them free from the Mysorean cavalry noose around them, and put them into virgin

The storming of the breach at Seringapatam



country. Not only that, but many local farmers eagerly brought in livestock and produce to sell to the EIC, knowing that it would only be destroyed by Tipu's forces anyway. The supply situation immediately improved, and so did the speed of the march. It took the Mysorean forces a week to re-establish their cordon around the massive columns.

On 27 March, Tipu drew up his army along a ridgeline at Malavelley. His infantry and cavalry were drawn up with his artillery arrayed in front of them. Harris arranged his men into two columns which ended up becoming more of an arrow-head formation, with a column of the Nizam's troops (led by Colonel Wellesley and his 33rd Foot) on their left. They advanced towards the ridge under steady cannon fire, until Tipu launched his men forward in a charge which blocked his cannon's line of fire. Wellesley calmly swung his column into a line and opened fire at 60 metres range, his volleys shattering Tipu's infantry. On the other flank, Mysorean cavalry and elephants managed to get around behind some of the EIC battalions, causing confusion. A counter-charge by the Nizam's horsemen rammed into their flank, while the 12th Foot held their fire until the Mysoreans were just ten metres away before firing a volley into their midst.

Lieutenant Bayley of the 12th recalled, "At the word 'Fire!' a volley was effectually poured into the wedge of cavalry, followed by a rapid and well-directed file firing. As the smoke cleared away a whole rampart of men and horses lay extended on the ground in front of the regiment. The elephants, maddened by pain, were making off, swinging their chains about in the midst of the cavalry."

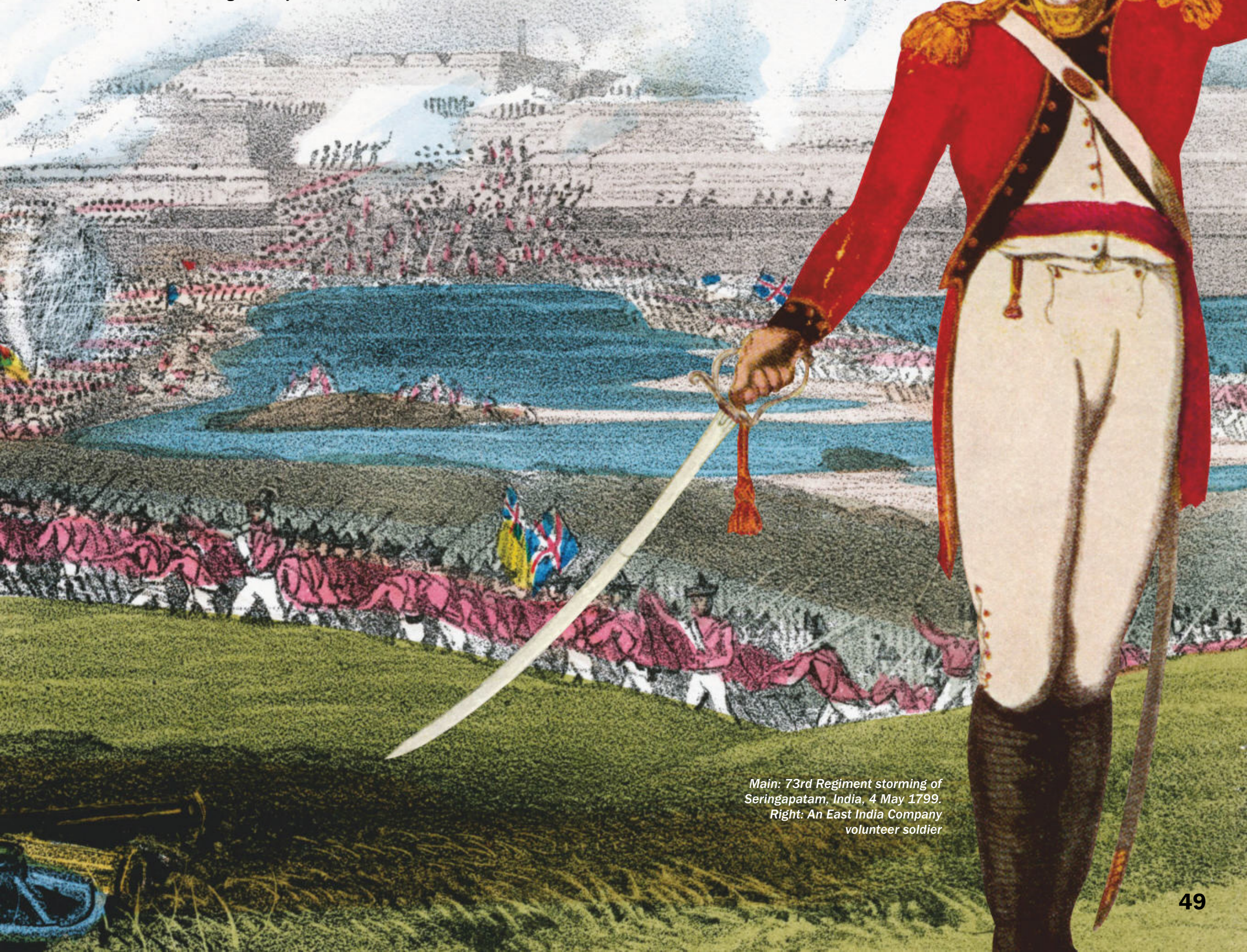
The Tipu's troops fell back towards the ridge, where their artillery was already limbering up and retreating. Placing the guns in front of the line had been a mistake.

After the battle, Sir Arthur Wellesley, later the Duke of Wellington, would defend many ridgelines, but would always be careful to intersperse his guns among the infantry. That way, they could continue to fire around the infantry and give support as they advanced, rather than having their fire blocked.

Tipu now withdrew to Seringapatam, leaving his cavalry to again provide the main resistance. Harris, who had suffered surprisingly light casualties, conducted another abrupt change of direction two days later and once more managed to break into bountiful territory. By 4 April, Harris was just a few miles short of Seringapatam, and with six clear weeks until the monsoon.

The siege begins

Seringapatam sat on a triangular island three miles long, surrounded by the River Cauvery. The actual city, behind imposing walls, sat on the western end of the island, while much of the rest was taken up by military camps protected by earthworks. When the British had attacked the city in 1792 they had approached from the north, across the main course of the Cauvery, and since then that wall had been significantly strengthened. Approaching from the east or south meant fighting through Tipu's army to get at the walls. This only left the weakest, western wall, but what the EIC could not see was the new, second wall built just inside the older outer one. Harris chose the western approach.



Main: 73rd Regiment storming of Seringapatam, India, 4 May 1799.
Right: An East India Company volunteer soldier

There were several obstacles in the way to this approach, including a raised aqueduct bordered by areas of jungle ('topes'), and a stream known as the Little Cauvery, and then a branch of the River Cauvery itself. Arriving on 5 April 1799, the army came under harassing musketry and rocket fire from the area of the aqueduct. An attempt was made that night to clear Tipu's forces from the aqueduct and topes, with two columns going forward, each consisting of a single King's battalion and two battalions of the Madras Native Infantry. The southern one, led by Colonel Wellesley with the 33rd Foot, approached the tope near the village of Sultanpetah, and like the north column was met with intense rocket fire. Both attacking columns quickly fell into disarray, fighting in unfamiliar country and disorientated by the flames and glare of the rockets. Lieutenant Bayley recorded, "No hail could be thicker ... a shower of rockets, some of which entered the head of the column, passing through to its rear, causing death, wounds, and dreadful lacerations from the long bamboos of 20 or 30 feet, which are invariably attached to them. The instant a rocket passes through a man's body it resumes its original impetus of force, and will thus destroy ten or 20 until ... expended. The shrieks of our men from these unusual weapons was terrific; thighs, legs, and arms left fleshless with bones protruding in a shattered state from every part of the body, were the sad effects of these diabolical engines of destruction." Both columns fell back in utter confusion, although casualties were light. It was a rare failure in Wellesley's career.

Order was gradually resumed, and at dawn the attack was resumed, clearing the aqueduct in short order. Over the following days the army established itself and plans were drawn up. On 14 April, General Stuart's force arrived on the northern side of the Cauvery. Further outposts among the waterways facing Harris were cleared, culminating in a sweep by Wellesley on 26-7 April, that finally cleared the enemy from west of the Cauvery. The next day, the first breaching batteries opened fire on the walls.

On 3 May the breach was declared practical for an assault, even though it had only opened a gap along the top of the outer wall; the lower inner wall was not visible. The breach was 60 metres wide, and the steep ramp of rubble had tumbled down to partially fill the ditch at the base of the wall. The British forces were gathered overnight in the trenches near the river, while Lieutenant Lalor of the 73rd Foot marked the shallower crossing areas with flags.

Into the breach

The EIC forces would go forward in two columns, each climbing a different side of the breach before turning left and right to start clearing the defenders from the walls. Each was led by a small 'Forlorn Hope', groups of volunteers who would spring any ambushes and draw the first enemy volley. The volunteers, a sergeant and 12 men

Great Battles

SIEGE OF SERINGAPATAM

01 APPROACH TO THE CITY

Harris decided that the western walls presented the best chance of success, and later determined on a site near the north-western bastion. His and the Nizam's forces deployed accordingly to the west of the city.

02 NIGHT TIME DISASTER

Operations on the night of 5-6 April saw two British and EIC columns attempt to clear Tipu's men from an aqueduct ('tope') across their path. Both columns became hopelessly disorganised and fell back. A more successful attack was staged the following dawn.

03 STUART'S FORCE ARRIVES

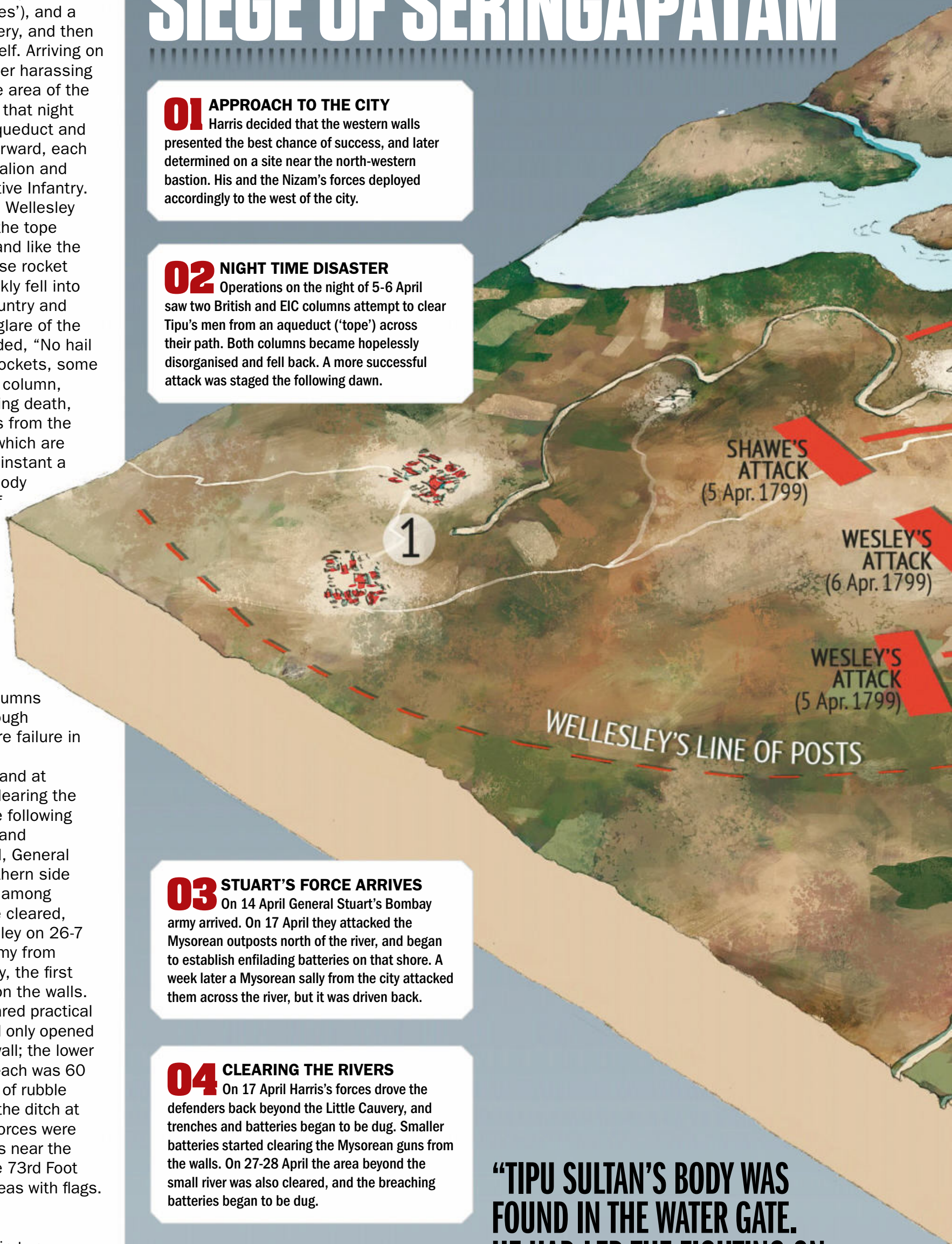
On 14 April General Stuart's Bombay army arrived. On 17 April they attacked the Mysorean outposts north of the river, and began to establish enfilading batteries on that shore. A week later a Mysorean sally from the city attacked them across the river, but it was driven back.

04 CLEARING THE RIVERS

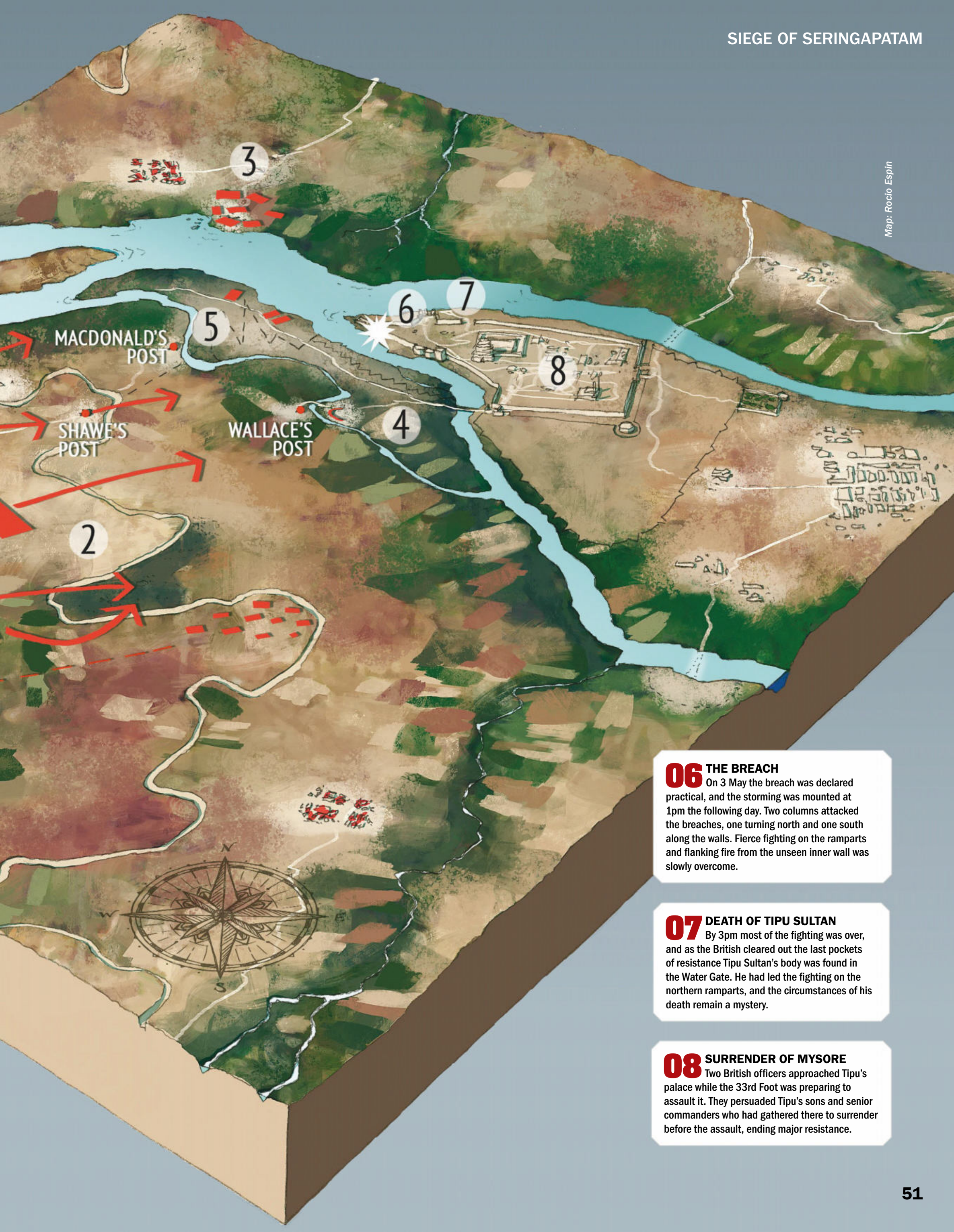
On 17 April Harris's forces drove the defenders back beyond the Little Cauvery, and trenches and batteries began to be dug. Smaller batteries started clearing the Mysorean guns from the walls. On 27-28 April the area beyond the small river was also cleared, and the breaching batteries began to be dug.

05 POWDER MILL BATTERY

On 20 April the Mysorean outpost in the old Powder Mill was finally captured, removing a thorn in the EIC's side. It was immediately developed as a breaching battery, and two days later was firing onto Seringapatam's walls.



"TIPU SULTAN'S BODY WAS FOUND IN THE WATER GATE. HE HAD LED THE FIGHTING ON THE NORTHERN RAMPARTS, AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS DEATH REMAIN A MYSTERY"

**06 THE BREACH**

On 3 May the breach was declared practical, and the storming was mounted at 1pm the following day. Two columns attacked the breaches, one turning north and one south along the walls. Fierce fighting on the ramparts and flanking fire from the unseen inner wall was slowly overcome.

07 DEATH OF TIPU SULTAN

By 3pm most of the fighting was over, and as the British cleared out the last pockets of resistance Tipu Sultan's body was found in the Water Gate. He had led the fighting on the northern ramparts, and the circumstances of his death remain a mystery.

08 SURRENDER OF MYSORE

Two British officers approached Tipu's palace while the 33rd Foot was preparing to assault it. They persuaded Tipu's sons and senior commanders who had gathered there to surrender before the assault, ending major resistance.

General Sir David Baird discovering the body of Tipu Sultan after storming Seringapatam





An official of the British East India Company riding on an elephant, end of 18th century

in each party, would receive promotions if they survived, the sergeants making the near impossible leap to become officers. Following the first 'Hopes' were two more, each a Lieutenant with 25 men. Behind them came the main columns, around 3,000 men each drawn from a range of units. In overall command was Major General Sir David Baird, who had been held as a prisoner in Seringapatam for several years in the early 1780s, and who thirsted for revenge.

At 1.00pm, the two columns rose up and surged forward. Tipu still had around 30,000 men in the city, but obviously could not bring all of them to face the breach. His artillery had been cleared from the outer walls by EIC guns, although rocketmen flooded back to the ramparts with their portable weapons. Infantry lined the parapets of the inner and outer walls. Lieutenant Bayley recalled, "The column at length reached the ascent of the breach, where numerous flankers who had preceded us were lying stretched on their backs, killed and wounded, some of the gallant officers waving their swords and cheering our men on. We dashed forward, and the top of the breach was soon crowned by our intrepid lads, and the British flag hoisted. But this was for a moment only. A sudden, sweeping fire from the inner wall came like a lightning blast, and exterminated the living mass."

Sergeant Graham, leading the Forlorn Hope of the left hand column, reached the top of the breach, paused, and cried "It's Lieutenant Graham now!" before falling dead, killed by musket fire.

On both sides the British and EIC troops scrambled up the rubble and clambered onto the parapets. Hand-to-hand fighting broke out as they also found themselves unexpectedly coming under flanking fire from the inner wall.

"LOOTING AND VIOLENCE, THE TRADITIONAL EPILOGUE TO ANY SIEGE, SPREAD THROUGH THE CITY. IN TERMS OF THE PLUNDER, THE EIC HAD HIT A RARE JACKPOT"

The force turning north found themselves facing troops led by Tipu in person, who stood in the front ranks being fed loaded muskets from behind. To the south, the second force met slightly less resistance, and slowly made progress. Led by Baird, they pushed the 600 metres to the Mysore Gate, and then on to the south east bastion, and finally the Bangalore Gate on the far side of the city – an advance of 1,300 metres in about one hour.

To the north of the breach, a British officer finally found a narrow path connecting the outer wall to the inner one. He dashed across, followed by his men in single file. Gradually they cleared the inner wall, and without the flanking fire the forces on the outer wall began to make headway. Tipu was pulled away by his bodyguards as Mysorean resistance crumbled. He was later found, dead along with his bodyguards, in a tunnel at the Water Gate. Who killed him remains a mystery, but it was clear that he went down fighting.

The rest of the city now became flooded with British and Indian soldiers with their blood up and free from the control of their officers. Looting and violence, the traditional epilogue to any siege, spread through the city. In terms of the plunder, the EIC had hit a rare

jackpot. Materials worth some £2million (in contemporary terms) were taken from Tipu's palace and other buildings, including vast amounts of gold and jewellery. Huge military stores were also found – over a thousand cannon, 100,000 muskets, and 200 tons of gunpowder. Fortunes were made at the time, and from the prize money subsequently paid out. Around 9,000 Mysorean troops were killed in the attack, and around 1,500 British and EIC troops were killed or wounded.

In the aftermath of the siege, Sir Arthur Wellesley was placed in command of the city, and subsequently the rest of Mysore. This was the real start of British expansion in India, a path that in half a century would see the bulk of the sub-continent come under their control.



A blunderbuss flintlock pistol

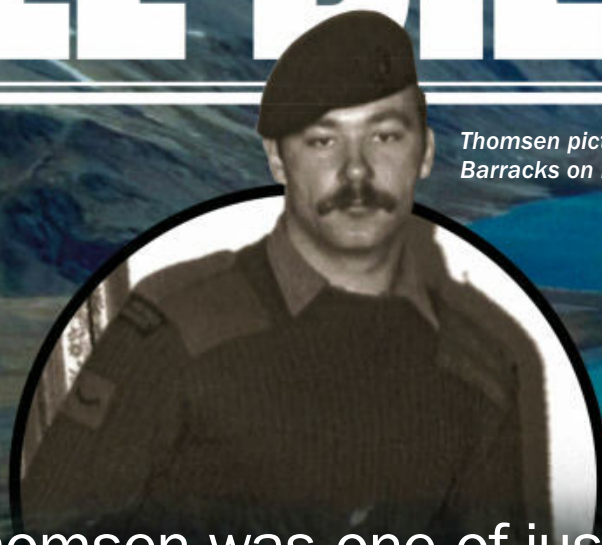


FURTHER READING

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- ★ ANIRUDDHA RAY (ED), *TIPU SULTAN AND HIS AGE: A COLLECTION OF SEMINAL PAPERS*, THE ASIATIC SOCIETY
- ★ JOHN SALMOND, *A REVIEW OF THE ORIGIN, PROGRESS, AND RESULT, OF THE LATE DECISIVE WAR IN MYSORE*, W. DAVIES
- ★ COL. BAYLEY, *DIARY OF COLONEL BAYLEY, 12TH REGIMENT, 1796-1803*, ARMY AND NAVY CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY

SOUTH GEORGIA, 1982

“WE ALL DIE HERE”



Thomsen pictured at Moody Brook Barracks on East Falkland, c.1981-82

George Thomsen was one of just 22 Royal Marines who tenaciously fought invading Argentine forces, in an extremely isolated battle that began the Falklands War

WORDSTOM GARNER

KING EDWARD POINT

The battle was fought in the environs of King Edward Cove. Grytviken is to the right while the Royal Marines were positioned at King Edward Point

South Georgia is one of the most remote islands in the world. At 104 miles long and 23 wide, it is a mountainous drop in the southern Atlantic Ocean. To its south lies only the icy desolation of Antarctica and its nearest inhabited neighbours are the Falkland Islands – almost 800 nautical miles away.

In 1982, South Georgia was the temporary home to a handful of scientists and workers of the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) but it was to be an accidental catalyst of a bloody conflict. Like the Falklands, the island is a British Overseas Territory but Argentine forces invaded it in April 1982. The defence was overseen by a hastily assembled detachment of only 22 Royal Marine commandos led by Lieutenant Keith Mills. Despite their small number, they were determined to defend this far-flung outpost to the death.

One of these men was Lance Corporal George Thomsen. Then a 24-year-old section commander, Thomsen vividly describes how the Marines outfought the Argentineans at the frozen ends of the earth.

“Beyond your worst nightmare”

A native of Sunderland, Thomsen defied his father to join the armed forces, “I always wanted to be a Royal Marine. I wanted to join when I was 16 but my dad said I had to learn a trade so I served my apprenticeship as a coded welder and pipe fitter. I finished when I was 20 and joined the Marines at 21. My dad didn’t speak to me for weeks but I’d done what he wanted me to do. It was now time to do something for me.”

Thomsen joined the Royal Marines in October 1978 and by early 1981 he was the section commander of NP (Naval Party) 8901. Now the team leader of eight Marine commandos, Thomsen and his men volunteered for a year-long tour of the Falkland Islands, “I knew they were a pair of desolate islands but we could choose where we wanted to go. We all jumped on the wagon because at the time some of the best-trained Marines were down there. We’d also served together before.”

For Thomsen, his deployment had several benefits, “I went so that all the lads could stay together in my team. We thought we’d go down there because it was a year away from the rest of the world and it was also a way to save some money up.”

The Marines departed for the Falklands in March 1981 but Thomsen’s first impressions

of Port Stanley were not encouraging, “It was like Toytown. All the roofs were made of wriggly tin and it was way beyond your worst nightmare. Two of my mates who were on the detachment before me were standing at the jetty waiting with their thumbs down! I thought, ‘George, you’ve made a mistake.’”

Thomsen’s first duty on the Falklands was to guard a convicted murderer, “They locked me in the cell with him while the policeman went off to do other jobs. He was an old, local bloke who’d killed his wife because he thought she was cheating on him. I just sat there talking to him while he waited to be extradited. That was my introduction to the islands.”

A brewing conflict

During his tour, Thomsen also sailed with the icebreaker HMS Endurance to guard the Round The World Yacht Race at Cape Horn where he experienced Force 11 storms and 40-foot waves. He even visited Argentina several times, including in February 1982, “After the race we went with Endurance to Mar del Plata for a refit. It was a naval dock where the Argentinean submarines were based but even their navy didn’t know there was a war coming!”

Nevertheless, NP8901 received a rude awakening the following month back on the Falklands, “Things didn’t become serious until 19 days before we were due to leave. My war began when we were downtown and having a few beers at someone’s house.

“We were expecting a new detachment to arrive but were told that the boss wanted to see us immediately. The messenger whispered to me out of earshot, ‘The Argentineans have invaded South Georgia.’”

When the Marines returned to base, Thomsen met Lieutenant Keith Mills from HMS Endurance and was given information from the governor of the islands, “As far as they knew a scrap metal merchant ship had landed at Leith Harbour, planted the Argentinean flag and shot at the BAS.”

Thomsen only discovered the real circumstances after the war, “What had really happened was that the ship’s commander should have got his papers stamped at Grytviken. They had a lease so they were perfectly within their rights. Even the flag going up would have been just a laugh because the Argentineans thought they weren’t being watched. Also, the ‘shots’ were where they had just shot a couple of reindeer for a barbecue, not at the BAS.”



HMS Endurance docked at Grytviken. Norwegians originally founded the settlement as a whaling station



Thomsen helped to shoot down an Argentinean Puma helicopter, which crashed onto Brown Mountain Ridge

GRYTVIKEN



Nevertheless, the landing was a cunning tactic by the Argentinean high command, “I think the affair with the scrap merchant was a decoy to get us involved on South Georgia. It was a case of ‘divide and conquer’. For the invasion of the Falklands, they used their Marines and Special Forces and there were no conscripts. They sent 350 of them in two groups: one to hit Moody Brook [the Royal Marines’ barracks] and one to capture the governor. The whole of the Argentinean Navy was sat off Port Stanley on 1 April – but we weren’t there.”

A party of Royal Marines had been quickly dispatched to South Georgia. Thomsen hand-picked men from NP8091 to join Mills’s Marines from HMS Endurance, “I took my section, a two-inch mortar and other guys who I knew would stand and fight. They were not your drinking buddies and I got the tough guys that I’d served with in other theatres as well as a signaller.”

“The most beautiful place”

With a combined strength of 22 commandos, the Marines sailed for South Georgia on 21 March 1982 for a choppy four-day voyage. When he arrived at the island, Thomsen was awestruck, “The Falklands are just barren but South Georgia has mountains and glaciers. When the weather was right it was the most beautiful place I’d ever seen.”

HMS Endurance soon departed from the settlement of Grytviken and the Marines were now left alone, “We were isolated when the Endurance left. The Royal Navy were dropping us in the s**t but we were going to dig in, stand and fight.”

Although Thomsen felt abandoned by Endurance, the lightly-armed icebreaker could only offer minimal assistance, “The ship’s Wasp helicopters were knackered and they

“WE WERE GUTTED AND I WAS LIKE A BEAR WITH A SORE HEAD BUT WE CONTINUED WITH OUR PLANS”

probably thought, ‘The Marines are better off on their own. We can’t really help them.’ They basically dropped us and legged it.”

A reconnaissance mission to Leith Harbour soon confirmed the planting of the Argentinean flag. Over the next few days the Marines also encountered a surveying Russian vessel. Its presence led Thomsen to realise that war was imminent, “When this Russian spy ship came in, I knew that something was going to happen.”

Preparing for battle

On 2 April, Argentine forces invaded the Falklands with the intention of capturing Port Stanley and Governor Rex Hunt. Dozens of Royal Marines remained on the islands but the Argentineans’ detailed plan involved dirty tactics, “It was supposed to be a simultaneous attack on the Falklands and South Georgia but because the weather was bad they went to the Falklands first.

“They aimed to attack at 3.00am on 2 April, which they did. They sent 350 Special Forces to grab the governor and murder a bunch of Marines at Muddy Brook in their beds with silenced weapons. They would then stroll down with their cameras as though they’d liberated ‘Las Malvinas’ and that’s what the world would have seen.

“They knew a new Royal Marine detachment was arriving and their plan was to arrive at 3.00am after we’d had a few beers and got our

heads down. However, it was a big mistake. The new party hadn’t arrived and my section had been sent to South Georgia days before. [The Argentineans] also severely underestimated the capabilities of Royal Marine commandos. Despite this, our forces were split and they knew that.”

The Royal Marines on the Falklands were able to make a stand at Government House in Port Stanley before they were forced to surrender. Thomsen and his men heard the battle on the BBC World Service and felt helpless, “We were gutted and I was like a bear with a sore head but we continued with our plans. Mills said, ‘If they are coming, it won’t be until tomorrow. Try and get some rest and we’ll see what comes in the morning.’”

The 22 Marines had fortified the beach at King Edward Point and prepared defences around the BAS buildings, “We tried digging trenches with a JCB digger but it wouldn’t penetrate so we did it the old-fashioned way with picks and shovels. I dug an L-shaped gun trench and the lads from Endurance had a slightly easier time digging in a peat bog. I had to site the gun trench on rock solid ground right in front of Shackleton House.”

On the jetty, Marine Les Daniels ensured that the Argentineans would not be able to easily land, “He booby-trapped a box of 200 pounds of PE [plastic explosives], harpoon heads, nuts and screws. If they tried to land on the jetty it was rigged all the way back. On the beach there was a half a pound of PE every six feet in stones, not sand. There were big, chunky pebbles so they would have had the s**t blown out of them.”

The coming battlefield would be fought on limited ground and there would be no room to escape, “We were all dispersed in little positions from the jetty to the end, which was

"WE ALL DIE HERE"

"APPROXIMATELY 30,000
PEOPLE DISAPPEARED
AND WERE KILLED BY THE
JUNTA IN AN ATTEMPT TO
SILENCE OPPOSITION"

*Members of the Argentine
military police salute
with President Leopoldo
Galtieri, April 1982. The
junta's leaders were
subsequently convicted of
crimes against humanity*

WITNESSING THE JUNTA

THOMSEN HAD FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE OF ARGENTINA'S MILITARY DICTATORSHIP WHEN HE VISITED THE COUNTRY IN JULY 1981

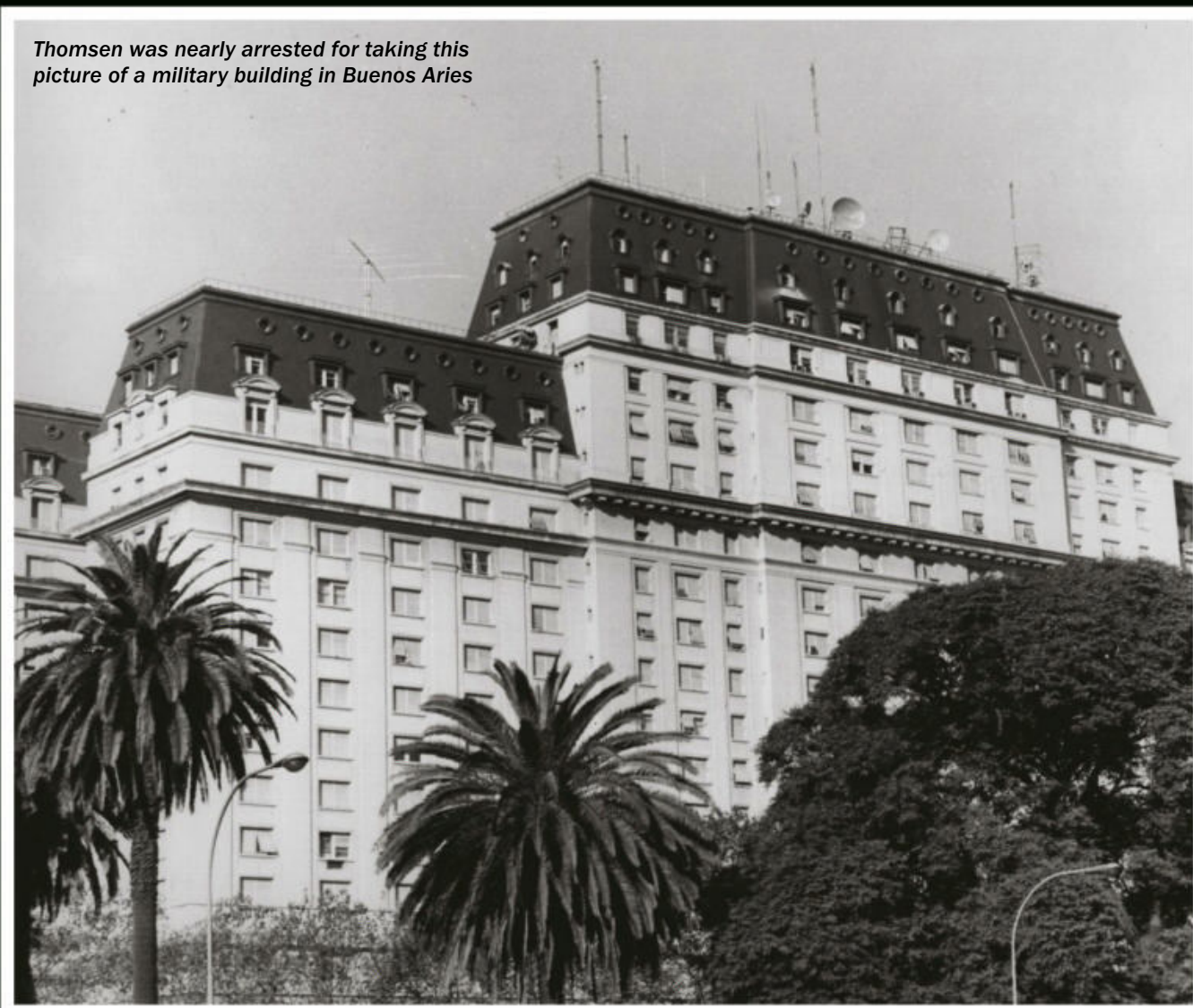
Between 1976-83, Argentina was ruled by a military dictatorship that was commonly known as the 'junta'. Throughout this period, the regime conducted a 'Dirty War' where political dissidents were hunted down. Approximately 30,000 people disappeared and were killed by the junta in an attempt to silence opposition. Thomsen witnessed this brutal regime as part of a British diplomatic bag run to Buenos Aires.

Along with his sergeant major, Thomsen was officially an emissary delivering messages from the governor of the Falklands to the British ambassador. He discovered a deceptively quiet city, "Funnily enough, it was really calm and 'safe' in the sense that the criminal element was virtually nonexistent because of the junta's armed policemen. You'd walk past them and they'd be armed with pump-action shotguns. They'd clamp down on everything apart from large protests during the day."

On his walkabouts, Thomsen ran into trouble, "I took photos of a big military building with aerials and dishes on the top. Unbeknownst to me it was a detention centre where people were likely tortured and interrogated. An undercover guy tried to snatch my camera off me and attempted to arrest us. I bluffed our way through and claimed we were tourists."

Despite the tension, Thomsen felt secure, "I took the photo and thought that the boss needed to see this when I got back. We had diplomatic immunity so they couldn't do anything but I guess I was technically spying."

Thomsen was nearly arrested for taking this picture of a military building in Buenos Aires



SOUTH GEORGIA, 1982

This photograph of all 22 Royal Marines was taken moments before the battle began. The pictured commandos include Thomsen (back row, seventh from right) and Lieutenant Keith Mills (back row, second from left)



only 200 yards. There was just 250 yards of land altogether so it was a very small place to defend and we had a mountain behind us. Our backs were literally against the wall.”

Working conditions had been severe, which was typical for South Georgia, “The weather would constantly change. You had torrential storms and you couldn’t even walk outside sometimes. You’d be leaning 45 degrees into the wind and it was absolutely horrendous. There was a Force 11 gale the day before the battle and the rain was horizontal.”

Once preparations were complete, the Marines waited in Shackleton House, a large prefabricated building where the BAS scientists lived and worked, “I had 24 hours to wait and it was like being on death row.

“You didn’t think about it when the lads were stood by you but you did if you went to the toilet or tried to get some sleep. It’s in those moments that it hits you.”

“SERGEANT PETER LEACH WAS CONCERNED THAT HARE WAS DRUNK BUT THOMSEN EXPLAINED, “I SAID, ‘PETE, HE DOESN’T DRINK, HE’S A PSYCHOPATH’”

Thomsen tried to think pragmatically by putting his men above himself, “My instant thought was to keep the lads alive and still do my job as a section commander, but if I bit the bullet then c’est la vie.

“Ultimately, your integrity is all you’ve got and your deeds will be your epitaph. That’s why I said to the lads, ‘We’ll fight.’”

The Marines were determined to make a stand, which Thomsen firmly conveyed to Mills, “I said to him at a briefing, ‘Don’t even think about surrendering. You cannot put your gun down and walk off as though nothing ever happened because you’ll never live it down.

We stand here, we fight and once we start losing blokes we all die here, end of story.’ To be fair, he did listen.”

Another Marine called Brasso Hare took this attitude even further in the bar of Shackleton House, “Brasso stood up and took Roald Amundsen’s ice axe off the wall. He said, ‘When I run out of rounds I’m going to bury this in the first man who comes over the top of my trench. He’ll be wearing this in his chest!’”

Sergeant Peter Leach was concerned that Hare was drunk but Thomsen explained, “I said, ‘Pete, he doesn’t drink, he’s a psychopath’ before I put Amundsen’s axe back on the wall.”

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“We’re going to kill the lot of them”

When 3 April dawned, the weather had improved, “It was silent, there was no wind and the bay was like a millpond. We didn’t even have to allow for wind when we aimed our rifles, which was a massive advantage.”

The Marines had a last briefing with the BAS before the 15-20 civilians sheltered in Grytviken Church. During this meeting Hare once again made his feelings known, “We’d dug the trenches and were debating the plan with Steve Martin, who was effectively the governor of South Georgia. Brasso came with a big grin on his face because he’d taken the red, double-handed fire axe instead and said, ‘You’re not taking this off me!’ With the axe in his hands he said to Martin, ‘What part of, “We’re going to kill the lot of them” do you not understand?’ It was unbelievable.”

After the meeting, all 22 Marines posed for a group photograph that was taken by Martin. However, 30 seconds later the enemy

appeared, “He took the picture and then we heard a helicopter in the distance. We legged it into the trenches while Steve tried to get back to Grytviken Church. The helicopter weaned off and disappeared. We were still in the trenches and waited before the Guerrico came around the corner.”

ARA Guerrico was a Drummond-class corvette of the Argentine Navy. Crewed by 85 sailors and armed with weapons that included a 100mm naval gun and Exocet missiles, she was a formidable opponent. The Antarctic survey ship ARA Bahía Paraíso, which provided helicopter support and an unverifiable number of troops, also accompanied Guerrico.

The odds were now stacked against the Marines, “We’d heard that a similar ship to HMS Endurance would have had two helicopters, possibly with air-to-air or air-to-ship missiles plus about 350 Marines or Special Forces. So there were 22 Marines against at least 350 of

them, which we thought were pretty even odds! Of course we didn’t know really how many there were and we never knew about the warship.”

In the face of such opposition, Thomsen remained stoic, “It was massive odds but whatever rocks up at your door you’ve got to deal with it.”

Downing a Puma

It was now late morning and the Royal Marines watched as the Guerrico steamed into King Edward Cove without firing before it temporarily retired. An Argentine Alouette helicopter then landed some of their own Marines close to the British positions. Thomsen was surprised at their tactics, “They never attacked the way you conventionally thought they would to overrun the place. They could of with 350 guys but they dropped half a dozen guys off in an Alouette just to the left of the jetty, which was 200 yards away from us.”



A Puma gunship flew in with more troops, “The world thinks the Argentines started the battle but no. We could not afford to let that helicopter land and the whole lot had to go. There was a guy standing in the door with a belt-fed machine-gun and that was it. Al Larkin whacked this guy, took out the machine-gun and within seconds everybody else opened up.”

The Puma was riddled with gunfire from the ground, “I put dozens of rounds through the sides of that helicopter into the blokes. As my last magazine was still going I switched my fire to the engines but that was just my contribution. When my lads opened up over 1,000 rounds went through it. It was a hail of bullets and the helicopter crash landed.”

The pilot managed to crash the helicopter on land. He survived but many of his passengers did not, “The pilot was in the safest seat on the right and I thought he was the only one to survive. Everyone else on the left side was in the firing line.”

Disabling a warship

With the loss of the helicopter, Mills was receiving radio advice from his superiors that was flatly ignored by the Royal Marines, “The British government were saying to us, ‘Do not escalate this situation any further.’ However, they were not there on the ground.

“As far as we were concerned it was just us against the Argentines, so it was tough... They wanted to dance so it was time to rock and roll. I wanted to fight because that is what being a Royal Marine is all about.” Meanwhile, the *Guerrico* attacked, “After the Puma was shot down she came in with the 40mm

“GUERRICO WAS FORCED TO STEER OUT OF THE BAY AND BECAME THE FIRST SHIP IN MILITARY HISTORY TO BE SERIOUSLY DAMAGED BY LAND-BASED ANTITANK WEAPONS”

cannons blasting and everybody fired at the ship. The shells were around my ears and the tracer zipped right past me. They were unlucky not to get me.”

Despite only having a limited number of antitank rockets, Marines Dave Coombs and John Stonestreet inflicted considerable damage on the *Guerrico* while operating a Carl Gustav recoilless rifle, “When the first antitank weapon fired it dropped short when the ship was on its way in. Then it did a handbrake turn to get out. In the meantime, the lads fired three consecutive rounds that misfired. However, when the last shot was fired it went ‘BOMPH’ into the ship just below the waterline. There was a big hole in the side and it listed 20 degrees. It was sinking.”

Meanwhile, Thomsen contributed to this remarkable assault by helping to damage *Guerrico*’s four Exocets, “I also fired but not with the big bazooka although I put holes in the Exocets. They couldn’t launch them because they were ship-to-ship although whether they were destroyed we don’t know. I can’t speak for the other lads but I started putting bullets through them.”

Although Thomsen had positioned his gun team in a trench he personally fought in undulating tussock grass with Marine Jock Hunter. Thomsen also risked his life when the

Guerrico attacked the Marines’ positions with 40mm anti-aircraft guns, “I saw one guy going back along the deck to get more ammunition and started shooting at him. I was exposed to get that shot and sat on my heel in an alternative firing position. It was definitely the best shot I made. Steve Parsons on the LMG and Steve Chubb then rained fire down on the 40mm gun position itself.

Guerrico was forced to steer out of the bay and became the first ship in military history to be seriously damaged by land-based antitank weapons, “She sat out in the bay to where we couldn’t get her and that’s when they reassessed the situation. We’d shot down one of their helicopters and torn holes in their ship.”

“Last man standing”

The Argentines who had landed near the Royal Marines now resumed an exchange of fire, which resulted in the wounding of Corporal Nigel Peters in the arm. Elsewhere, the *Guerrico* began to inaccurately fire shells at the British positions with her main gun, “We’d damaged the gun so that it couldn’t properly elevate. The ship had to move backwards and forwards to try and drop shells on us.”

Despite the inaccuracy, coming under shellfire was still terrifying, “It is horrendous when you’re being shelled. You could hear

The remains of the Puma helicopter that was shot down by the Royal Marines can still be seen on South Georgia



A Marine from NP8901 live firing a Carl Gustav 84mm antitank weapon

the crack and whistle as they went over your head and crashed into the mountain behind. It was only a matter of time before they got a shell into our trenches.”

It was this shelling and the wounding of Peters that persuaded Mills to negotiate with the landed Argentineans, “He knew that if a few of us were killed then we’d all die. He tried to call it a day at a time when we had made our point and they had lost loads.”

Mills now performed an astonishing act of personal bravery, “There was a lull and that was when Mills went down to speak to them. None of us would have done what he did and I was just about to send a two-inch mortar straight down to that position.

“I had my fingers on the lanyard when the sergeant major said, ‘George, he’s about to talk to them!’ I said, ‘F**k off, I can’t see him.’ He had to tell me, ‘No! Just hang fire!’ I had to tip the live mortar round out.”

During negotiations, Mills issued an ultimatum, “There was no surrender on South Georgia. I wasn’t privy to the conversation but he apparently said, ‘We’re stuck here but so are you. It’s up to you. You can call it a day or we can fight to the death – last man standing.’ He then looked at his watch and said, ‘I’ll give you five minutes to decide.’”

Mills was not bluffing and the Argentineans agreed to his terms that the Royal Marines would be treated well if they laid down their weapons. However, Thomsen wanted to keep fighting, “My blood had been up since the first bullet had been fired and I was seeing red.

“All the lads started walking to put their guns down but I was the last man to do so. I just

Shackleton defined his positive leadership skills with two quotes: “Difficulties are just things to overcome, after all” and “Optimism is true moral courage”

BURY ME NEXT TO ERNIE

THOMSEN DESCRIBES HIS ADMIRATION FOR SIR ERNEST SHACKLETON, THE LEGENDARY ANTARCTIC EXPLORER WHO HAD FAMOUS CONNECTIONS WITH SOUTH GEORGIA

Sir Ernest Shackleton (1874-1922) led three expeditions to the Antarctic and was famed for his leadership qualities.

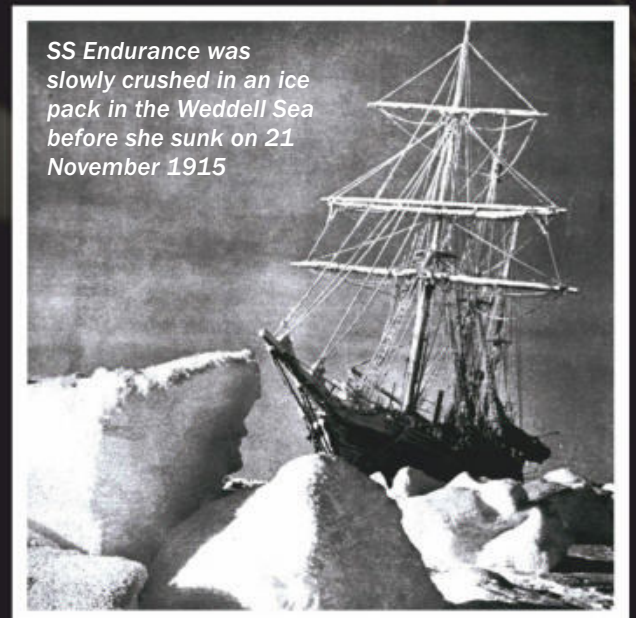
He is best remembered for the ill-fated but lauded Endurance expedition of 1914-16. Forgotten by a world consumed by WWI, the expedition lost its ship SS Endurance but Shackleton rescued his men from almost certain death. Leaving the majority of his 28 crew members on the inhospitable Elephant Island, he sailed in an open boat to South Georgia and crossed its mountains to get help.

All of Shackleton’s men were finally rescued on 30 August 1916. No men under his command had died and the expedition became one of the greatest survival stories of all time. Shackleton died on South Georgia during a subsequent visit in 1922 and was buried at Grytviken.

Thomsen was well aware of Shackleton’s achievements in 1982, “I knew about him before we reached South Georgia and of course HMS Endurance was named after his ship. However, when I talked about him half the lads said, ‘Who are you talking about?’ We’d stood by his grave two days before the battle but they were too busy watching the penguins.”

Such was Thomsen’s admiration for the explorer that he made a request in case he was killed, “When I knew the battle was imminent I said to my lads, ‘Bury me next to Ernie and I’ll be in good company.’ He was the greatest civilian leader of men and what he had to deal with was unbelievable. It would have been an honour to have been buried alongside Ernest Shackleton.”

SS Endurance was slowly crushed in an ice pack in the Weddell Sea before she sunk on 21 November 1915





An Argentine soldier showing a map in Port Stanley, 2 April 1982. The Royal Marines on South Georgia heard about the capture of the Falklands' capital on the BBC World Service



wanted them to leave me where I was, which would not have been a sensible decision. I was ordered to put my gun down, which was the most horrible moment of my life.”

With the benefit of hindsight, Thomsen is full of praise for how Mills handled the ceasefire, “Keith was a brilliant lad. I think everybody was then a bit peeved with him but he got us out of there. It was the only conceivable way to get out of South Georgia without losing face.

“I don’t mind admitting that my plan, which was ‘Last Man Standing’, was the wrong one. Mills was hard-nosed but, unlike me, he was thinking of the bigger picture.”

South Georgia was now in Argentinean hands and the Marines were taken aboard the Bahía Paraíso. Their captors were surprised at their small number, “They were shocked that there were only 22 of us and said, ‘Where’s the other 100?’ We said, ‘There isn’t any.’

“I thought we were going to be mown down then but they were s**t scared of us. They put officers and senior NCOs on sentry duty and for about ten minutes they thought I was the boss because I had the loudest voice. They didn’t realise Mills was in charge.” Thomsen still has no idea how many casualties the British inflicted, “They only admitted to losing 25. There were probably more but I don’t know many wounded there were. I do know there were 1,269 hits on the Guerrico and there were certainly a lot of casualties in the Puma.”

“THEY WERE SHOCKED THAT THERE WERE ONLY 22 OF US AND SAID, ‘WHERE’S THE OTHER 100?’”

The Marines were taken to the Argentinean naval base at Bahía Blanca where they were imprisoned for a week. They were then released and sent to Montevideo, Uruguay where, “The city’s governor put us in this hotel and we got absolutely rat-arsed on pink champagne.” The British government flew them back to the UK and Thomsen was pleased that his section was intact, “I took my men 8,000 miles and brought them all back alive. That was a hell of a feat although it was also a bit of luck.”

“My Valhalla”

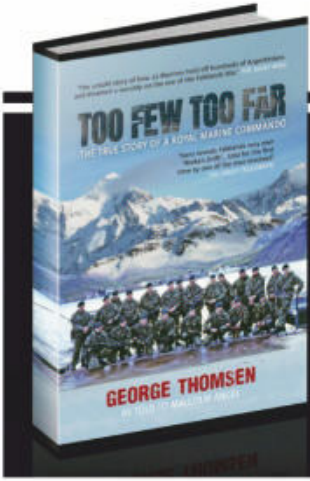
The British swiftly recaptured South Georgia during Operation Paraquet on 25 April 1982 although the rest of the war continued until 14 June. Nevertheless, it was the original defence that truly started the conflict, “After Port Stanley fell, Margaret Thatcher stated in Parliament that there were still 22 Royal Marines fighting on South Georgia and that Britain was consequently at war. On the back of what me and the lads did, we went to war.”

For Thomsen, the invasion of South Georgia was a life-changing event with Nordic parallels, “My ancestors are Vikings and it’s all about warriors. Whether you live or die is totally irrelevant. People have said that I was pitched in the wrong battle but no, I was pitched in the right battle and that was my destiny.

“Sure, it could be carnage but you didn’t know that. Us 22 Marines thought we were all going to die there and it was absolutely meant to be my Valhalla.”

With such an attitude, Thomsen has no regrets, “It was one of the most epic battles in military history and I thought all my birthdays had come at once. I loved every minute of it.”

THE FIGHT FOR THE FALKLANDS
TURN TO PAGE 82



George Thomsen and Malcolm Angel are the co-authors of *Too Far, Too Few: The True Story Of A Royal Marine Commando*, which is published by Amberley Publishing. To purchase a copy visit: www.amberley-publishing.com

Images: Amberley Publishing and George Thomsen, Alamy, Getty



Heroes of the Victoria Cross

FILIP KONOWAL

In the summer of 1917 this Ukrainian-born corporal braved heavy German fire to silence two enemy machine-gun nests in action at Hill 70, near the town of Lens, France

WORDS MICHAEL HASKEW

Buckingham Palace would seem a most unlikely place to find an ordinary Canadian soldier, but on 15 October 1917, King George V leaned forward and pinned the coveted crimson ribbon and bronze cross emblazoned “for valour” on the tunic of Corporal Filip Konowal.

The king then offered, “Your exploit is one of the most daring and heroic in the history of my army. For this, accept my thanks.”

The acts of bravery for which Konowal was recognised occurred in August of that year during the fight for Hill 70 near the town of Lens, France. Over two days, Konowal, a

member of the Canadian Army’s 47th Battalion, silenced a pair of menacing German machine-gun positions and killed at least 16 enemy soldiers, helping ensure the capture of the high ground. The fight for Hill 70 took place in the wake of the great victory at Vimy Ridge, where the four divisions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force fought side-by-side and won more than a battlefield triumph. Vimy Ridge awakened a sense of pride and achievement among Canadians, a national identity forged in the crucible of World War I.

At the time he received his Victoria Cross, Corporal Konowal was recovering from a grievous wound. A German sniper’s bullet had

nearly killed him, tearing into his face and neck. After months of recuperation, Konowal was well enough to receive the Commonwealth’s highest award for bravery. However, the effects of the wound left lasting scars, both physical and emotional. For years, he suffered with diminished capacity, gripped as well by debilitating post-traumatic stress disorder.

For Filip Konowal the long journey into the presence of the king began in the village of Kutkivtsi, Ukraine, then in the Podolia Governorate of the Imperial Russian Empire. He worked with his father as a stonemason and subsistence farmer and married at the age of 20 in 1908. Soon afterward, he was conscripted into the Russian Army, packed off to Siberia, and learned the art of hand-to-hand combat prior to serving as a bayonet instructor. Discharged after five years, he became one of many Ukrainians who sought opportunity by emigrating to Canada, leaving his wife and daughter behind – never to see them again.

Embarking from Vladivostok, Konowal crossed the Pacific Ocean and found work in British Columbia in the bustling Canadian timber trade. The lure of higher wages drew him eastward to Ontario, and he worked as a lumberjack and labourer until the economic boom waned and he found little prospect for full employment. With the outbreak of the Great War, Canada, a British dominion, was



Left: Shells bursting on Canadian positions at Lens, France in June 1917. In the foreground, a Canadian gun pit is camouflaged to avoid destructive enemy fire

“THIS NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER ALONE KILLED AT LEAST 16 OF THE ENEMY, AND DURING THE TWO DAYS’ ACTUAL FIGHTING CARRIED ON CONTINUOUSLY HIS GOOD WORK UNTIL SEVERELY WOUNDED”
Victoria Cross Citation

Ukrainian-born Corporal Filip Konowal earned the Victoria Cross while serving with the Canadian Army in World War I

a co-belligerent. Konowal answered the call for volunteers, enlisting in the 77th Canadian Infantry Battalion in July 1915 and traveling aboard a troopship from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Liverpool a year later.

As casualties mounted, the need for replacements meant transfers for many newly arrived soldiers, and Lance Corporal Konowal was reassigned to the 47th (British Columbia) Battalion, 4th Infantry Division. By August, he was in France. The 4th Division remained in reserve during the early weeks of the bloody Battle of the Somme, reaching the front in October. Some accounts relate that Konowal was wounded in the hand, suffering a severed tendon. He experienced bouts of severe illness during the harsh winter of 1916-17.

Nevertheless, Konowal's experience in the Czarist army was valuable. He was promoted to acting corporal three days before the Battle of Vimy Ridge, where the 47th Battalion participated in the seizure of a tree-covered hillock called 'the Pimple', fighting the Germans and a blinding snowstorm that struck during the opening moments of their attack.

At the end of July 1917, Allied forces launched the Passchendaele Offensive in Flanders, east of the embattled town of Ypres. When the thrust bogged down against heavy

**"I WAS SO FED UP WITH
STANDING IN THE TRENCH WITH
WATER TO MY WAIST THAT I SAID
TO HELL WITH IT AND STARTED
AFTER THE GERMAN ARMY"**

Konowal during post-war interview

resistance, an effort north of Vimy Ridge was initiated to draw enemy reinforcements away from the Passchendaele lines. The assault on Hill 70 was a key component, involving the capture of Lens. Hill 70 commanded the approaches to Lens across the Douai Plain and dominated the city, a dismal collection of demolished buildings that had already felt the heavy hand of war.

The Canadian attack on Hill 70 began on 15 August 1917, the infantry advancing after a heavy artillery barrage. In 20 minutes the high ground belonged to the Canadians. As expected the Germans launched counterattacks. The first of 21 enemy assaults began on 17

August. Most of these were launched from a grim area of coal slag heaps and destroyed rail lines. Known as the Green Crassier, this source of continuing German harassment had to be cleaned out.

While commanders called the move a "mopping up" operation, tough fighting lay ahead for six infantry companies, two each from the 46th, 47th, and 50th Battalions. Worsening weather complicated the effort as well. Konowal's company was assigned to clear the Germans from the houses, streets, and abandoned warehouses on the outskirts of Lens in Cite de Moulen.

Just after 4.30am, as fog and rain lifted, the Canadians stepped off. Moments later, a vicious German artillery barrage caught troops in the open. Shrapnel cut down every officer in Konowal's company, leaving the corporal in command. Heavy smoke shrouded the area, but Konowal directed his men across the Lens-Arras Road to a nearby trench.

Seconds later, the trench filled waist deep with freezing water. Compounding the company's predicament, steady German machine-gun fire pinned the men down.

Konowal assessed the situation and quickly deemed it intolerable. Without consulting anyone, including a wounded captain who assumed he was deserting and fired a pistol shot at him as he leaped out of the trench,

A wounded Canadian soldier being carried to a Dressing Station on the back of a comrade, two German prisoners following behind, during the attack on Hill 70 near Lens



His face revealing scars of war, Victoria Cross recipient Filip Konowal wears identifying 47th Battalion badges at his collar

Konowal dashed forward clutching only his Lee-Enfield rifle and a few hand grenades. While bullets kicked up gravel and whined past, he pressed on toward the machine-gun. Reaching a battered house, he entered through the door and found no enemy present. Diving through a window into the cellar, he was plunged into darkness and heard shots. Confronted by three German soldiers, he killed them all.

Continuing forward, Konowal located the machine-gun nest in a large crater just beyond the Lens-Arras Road. Canadian corpses were strewn around it, and the corporal lunged forward, catching seven Germans as they attempted to retreat. He shot three of them dead and in seconds dispatched the other four with his bayonet, proving his prowess in close-quarter combat. Exhausted, he shouldered the enemy machine-gun and returned with it to his company's position.

The next day, the Canadians were still trying to clear the Green Crassier. The 47th Battalion was ordered to attack a German machine-gun position at a large crater called Fosse No. 4. His blood still up, Konowal again mounted a one-man assault. A German patrol took him prisoner briefly, but he managed to grab a weapon and wipe out the enemy detachment. Moving on toward Fosse No. 4, he tossed a pair of ammonal grenades into the crater, rushed in and dispatched the crew – again with

“I MOPPED UP OVERSEAS
WITH A RIFLE AND HERE I
MUST MOP UP WITH A MOP”

Konowal on custodial work to
Prime Minister Mackenzie King

the bayonet. He destroyed the machine gun and withdrew. That afternoon, while Konowal stood in a trench conferring with a replacement officer, he was wounded by the German sniper.

More than 9,000 Canadian troops were killed or wounded at Hill 70, but the Germans suffered 20,000 casualties and suspended efforts to retake the high ground.

Without a doubt, Konowal's heroics saved many Canadian lives. His Victoria Cross citation reads, “Under his able direction all resistance was overcome successfully, and heavy casualties inflicted on the enemy.”

After recovering sufficiently, Konowal returned to duty in non-combat areas, serving with the Canadian liaison at the Russian Embassy in London and with the Canadian Forestry Corps. He also served briefly in Siberia and was discharged from the army in July

1919, only to find himself on trial for murder after stabbing a man to death while trying to defend a friend during a fight in the city of Hull, Quebec. Tried and acquitted by reason of insanity, he was institutionalised for seven years. When he was released in 1928, his condition had improved significantly. Attempts to locate his wife and daughter proved futile, and Konowal married again.

Struggling to find employment in the midst of the Great Depression, Konowal was befriended by the sergeant-at-arms of the House of Commons in Ottawa. He accepted a position as a junior caretaker, working in obscurity as greater recognition for his heroism remained elusive. Then, Canadian Prime Minister William Mackenzie King passed by one day and noticed the Victoria Cross ribbon. From that day until his retirement, Konowal worked as special custodian to room No. 16, the prime minister's office.

In 1956 Konowal attended a gathering of 300 Victoria Cross recipients honouring the centennial of the medal's authorisation. The event was hosted by Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister Anthony Eden. At last, he received some measure of the additional recognition that was long overdue. Konowal passed away quietly at age 70 in Hull, and is buried under a headstone that notes his greatest achievement.

Images: Alamy, Getty



Filip Konowal's wartime medals, including his Victoria Cross, are on permanent display in the Canadian War Museum



Corporal Filip Konowal's standard military headstone is emblazoned with the image of the Victoria Cross

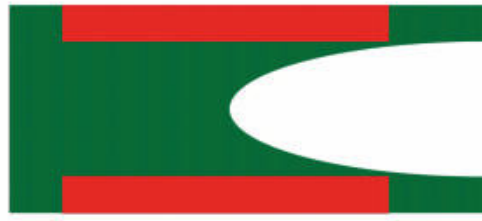


Corporal Filip Konowal posed for this portrait in full uniform in 1918 after receiving the Victoria Cross for heroism

**“HIS POWER
HAS ACQUIRED A
CHARACTER SUCH AS,
AT THE BEGINNINGS OF
ISLAM, WAS USED BY
MOHAMMED TO SHAKE
THREE-QUARTERS OF
THE GLOBE”**

SHAMYL THE THIRD IMAM OF DAGESTAN

Shamyl, the Third Imam of Dagestan, wears a long, full-skirted, wasp-waisted cloth tunic known as a chokha. It is strapped in place on his chest by silver cartridge cases. Atop his chokha he also often wore a black cape known as a bourka made of goat hair. He also wore a heavy black lambskin papakh on his head and was known to wear a red turban that conveyed his status as a religious leader. On his feet he wore soft black leather boots that were moulded to the ankle. He was armed with the traditional Caucasian shashka and a straight dagger.



THE SWORD OF ALLAH

Imam Shamil led Muslim rebels in Dagestan using a highly effective Fabian Strategy, which stalled the Russian imperial army's conquest

WORDS WILLIAM E. WELSH

Shamyl, the third imam of Dagestan, joined the dozens of warriors trying to escape the mountain stronghold of Akhoulgo on 21 August 1839. After a bloody 80-day siege, the Russians had finally succeeded in capturing the fortified village. As the conquerors methodically cleared the highland village one stone hut at a time, Shamil and a handful of compatriots lowered themselves by rope down a sheer cliff under in the black of night.

After resting in a cave halfway down the cliff, they continued their descent the next day reaching the river at the bottom of a shaded gorge. To deceive Russian pickets guarding the river, they launched a raft with straw dummies downstream and then walked upstream.

Evading renegade tribesman who wanted to bring his head to the Russians, Shamil journeyed east to the dark forests of Chechnya where he remained in hiding through the winter. When he reappeared the following year, he was more uncompromising than ever before. Although he had previously negotiated with the Russians, he vowed never to do so again.

"We have never had an enemy so savage and dangerous as Shamil," wrote Yevgeny Golovin, who led the Russian forces in the Caucasus from 1838 to 1842. "His power has acquired a character such as, at the beginnings of Islam, was used by Mohammed to shake three-quarters of the globe."

Russian buildup

Russian emperors had long had their eye on the strategic Caucasus region that served as a gateway to the Near East. Save for the Orthodox Christians of Georgia, the area between the Black and Caspian seas consisted of a devoutly

Muslim population. Czar Alexander I's armies had vanquished the Persians, compelling them in 1813 to relinquish Georgia, Dagestan and Azerbaijan to the Russians.

A string of small forts occupied by the Greben Cossacks along the Terek River served as a buffer between the tribes of the North Caucasus and Russia proper. The so-called Cossack Line gave the Russian Imperial Army a staging platform for operations in the beginning of the 19th century against the tribes of the Northern Caucasus.

Alexander appointed General Aleksey Petrovich Yermolov to build fortifications and tame the tribes of Chechnya and Dagestan. The veteran commander built forward bases at Grozny in the Chechen lowlands and Vnezapnaya just north of Dagestan.

Yermolov's strategy was to contain the Chechen and Dagestani tribes by encircling the regions with fortifications and garrisons. He rightly judged the cost in men and equipment of campaigning in the mountains would be exorbitant. Tens of thousands of Russians would perish over the 31-year-long Murid War between 1828 and 1859.

Alexander's successor, Czar Nicholas I, who came to power in 1825, inherited the problem of taming the wild mountain tribes. Nicholas welcomed the challenge with open arms. He devised various strategies

for the generals on the Caucasus front from the warmth and safety of his plush royal palace in St Petersburg.

Rise of the Murids

Muridism was born in the mountain villages of the Dagestan highlands where the people lived austere lives in villages of stone and thatch huts stacked up and burrowed into the sides of dun-coloured mountains. Its founders were two fanatical students of Islam who sought enlightenment in Sufi mysticism.

Shamil was born in 1797 in Ghimry in southern Dagestan, and his inseparable

Shamil's followers attack Russian infantry trying to capture the stronghold of Akhoulgo in 1839



friend Ghazi Mohammed was born three years earlier in the same location. The two Muslim theological students journeyed to another Dagestani village, Yaragul, where they studied the foreign language, philosophy, and religion under the direction of a group of highly respected Islamic scholars. While Shamil undertook the pilgrimage known as the Hajj to Mecca in 1828 where he learned about guerrilla warfare from Algerian nationalist Abd el-Qadir, Ghazi set about organising a resistance movement in Chechnya and Dagestan.

Ghazi established the Caucasian Imamate in 1829, and made Shamil his second in command. Ghazi raided Russian outposts on the Cossack Line and also attacked Russian garrisons on the Caspian coast.

Russian General Grigory Rosen stormed Ghazi's headquarters at Ghimry in 1832. In the bloody fighting, Ghazi was killed. Shamil, though, disappeared into the night after cutting down a handful of Russians with his shashka.

Ghazi's successor, Hamza Bek, spent most of his two-year rule in a protracted internal feud in Dagestan. He was slain by members of his inner circle on 19 November 1834. Five days after his assassination, Shamil was proclaimed the third imam of Caucasia.

Shamil's harsh rule

Shamil learned valuable lessons from the mistakes of his two predecessors. He came to power with a clear idea of what he wanted to accomplish and what he wanted to avoid. First and foremost, he wanted to unite the tribes of the Northern Caucasus against the Russians. He planned to do so by calling for a

Left: Imam Shamil

Muslim holy war against the Russians. Once this was achieved, he planned to govern his domain by Sharia Law. Additionally, he planned to studiously avoid pitched battles with the Russians; instead, he would use a Fabian strategy that combined guerrilla strikes with scorched-earth tactics.

For the most part Shamyl fought a defensive war. This was because of the clear superiority the Russians enjoyed in men and equipment. The Imam's best prospects lay in ambushing the Russian columns as they lumbered through the unforgiving terrain of both regions under his control.

In his corner of the Caucasus, Shamyl intended to allow nothing to stand in the way of his implementing what he believed to be Allah's will. If a tribe refused to join the Murid resistance, Shamyl had no qualms about doing whatever was necessary to make it comply, even if that meant slaughtering the entire village. Shamyl's bloody retributions ultimately drove many of the mountain tribes into the arms of the Russians.

Shortly after assuming power, Shamyl journeyed to Circassia in an effort to persuade its chieftains into joining forces with him against the Russians. They flatly told Shamyl they were not interested in joining forces with him. It would have been impractical to try to impose his wishes on the Circassians given that they lived so far away from his homeland. His dream of uniting all of the tribes of the Northern Caucasus would never come to pass.

Siege and truces

The Russians undertook numerous road and bridge building projects to open up the interior to their armies. In July 1837 Shamyl found himself in a perilous predicament. General Karl Faesy besieged Shamyl and his troops in the village of Tiliq. To buy himself time to recover for future operations, Shamyl proposed a truce. Faesy informed the czar that he had obtained Shamyl's submission, which was completely false. In many respects, Faesy won the battle, but lost the campaign for he had entered the highlands with 20,000 men and only emerged with 5,000 having lost the majority of his force as a result of battle losses and disease.

Another Russian commander, General Franz Kluge von Klugenau, conducted additional negotiations with Shamyl in September of that year, but they had no lasting results. Klugenau

“SHAMYL’S BEST PROSPECTS LAY IN AMBUSHING RUSSIAN COLUMNS AS THEY LUMBERED THROUGH THE UNFORGIVING TERRAIN OF BOTH REGIONS UNDER HIS CONTROL”

Russian troops storm Shamyl's home village of Ghimry early in the war



Defenders withdraw across a bridge during the protracted siege of Akhoulgo



flew into a rage during the meeting when Shamil refused to reach a compromise with him.

In spring 1839 General Pavel Grabbe set out with 6,000 Russians to destroy Shamil's main base at Akhoulgo. Shamil launched several attacks designed to force Grabbe to turn back, but these efforts were unsuccessful. The Murid leader braced for an attack with only 1,000 warriors to defend his stronghold.

Akhoulgo was perched on the summit of a mountain 600 feet above the Andi Koyso River that flowed around it on three sides. The village actually consisted of two villages, New Akhoulgo and Old Akhoulgo, located on separate plateaus joined by a narrow plank bridge. Shamil substantially improved its defences by constructing new watchtowers, blockhouses, and trenches.

Grabbe's siege was akin to the siege of a walled city in medieval times. The Russians hauled guns up adjacent mountains to support three columns of troops that used ladders and ropes to work their way up the mountain. To disrupt the Russians' ascent, the Murids rolled boulders down the slopes. The Russians made five major assaults over the course of their 80-day siege. Midway through the siege, Golovin arrived with 3,500 fresh troops.

After the fourth assault in mid-August, Shamil discussed surrender terms, but

they were not to his liking. As a gesture of good faith, he turned his 12-year-old son, Djemmel Eden, over to the Russians. Although he expected that his son would be held in captivity in Dagestan, the Russians whisked him away to St Petersburg. When Shamil learned of his son's fate, he was furious.

The Russians resumed their attack on 17 August. They overran New Akhoulgo and were preparing to cross the bridge into Old Akhoulgo when a mob of women and children blocked their way. This bought time for the surviving Murids to try to escape by using ropes to descend the sheer cliffs. The Russians suffered nearly 3,000 casualties over the course of the siege. Only 100 Murid warriors escaped.

Undermining Shamil

Czar Nicholas appointed General Mikhail Vorontsov in 1844 to serve as the new commander in-chief in the Northeastern Caucasus. Vorontsov learned that Shamil was operating from the village of Darghiyya in southeastern Chechnya, so he set out in



Left: Shamil's troops battle Russians in the strategic Akhatle Pass in Dagestan



Shamyl surrenders
to General Alexander
Baryatinsky in 1859



spring 1845 for Shamyl's new base. Shamyl had no intention of enduring a siege as he had six years earlier. He used scorched-earth tactics, removing or burning food stores along the Russian route. Shamyl had 6,000 Murids under his command and his cavalry constantly harassed the rear of the Russian column.

The Murids also bombarded the Russians with captured guns and sharpshooters fired on them from concealed positions.

To frighten the enemy, Shamyl had his men drape the mutilated bodies of slain Russians across barricades made of felled trees. Like Faesy before him, Vorontsov suffered appalling losses from countless skirmishes, disease, and sickness. It was becoming increasingly clear to the tsar that if his troops were to defeat Shamyl, they would need a new strategy.

Nicholas replaced Vorontsov with General Alexander Baryatinsky in 1847. Baryatinsky believed that in order to defeat Shamyl the Russians would need to launch a series of continuous campaigns that would not allow the imam breathing space to rebuild his forces. He

also believed that the Russians should pursue a humane approach to the neutral and defeated tribes to lure them away from Shamyl.

Baryatinsky shunned frontal assaults in favour of wide flanking marches designed to surround rebel forces. As for the neutral and defeated tribes, Baryatinsky rebuilt their villages, replaced their livestock, and allowed a measure of self-rule to earn their loyalty. Dagestani tribes began defecting to the Russians in large numbers in the 1850s owing to Baryatinsky's enlightened policies.

Final stand

The Russians finally isolated and encircled Shamyl in late August 1859 at Gunib. By that time, Shamyl's army had dwindled to just 400 rebels. Moreover, he was encumbered by the rebels' families. The Murids occupied a bare mountaintop that was shielded on all sides by rock outcroppings.

Baryatinsky directed the assault, which was supported by Russian artillery. He told his generals that Shamyl was to be taken alive if at

all possible. Baryatinsky halted the attack on three occasions to ask Shamyl if he wanted to surrender. Shamyl finally accepted the offer to spare his soldiers' families.

Shamyl expected to be executed, but Czar Alexander II, who took the Russian throne four years earlier, treated him with great respect. Shamyl lived for the next ten years in exile at Kaluga outside Moscow. Shamyl received permission in 1869 to journey to the holy cities in Arabia. He died in Medina two years later.



FURTHER READING

- ★ BADDELEY, JOHN F. *THE RUSSIAN CONQUEST OF THE CAUCASUS* (LONDON: LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO., 1908)
- ★ BLANCH, LESLEY. *THE SABRES OF PARADISE* (LONDON: JOHN MURRAY, 1960)
- ★ GAMMER, MOSHE. *MUSLIM RESISTANCE TO THE TSAR: SHAMIL AND THE CONQUEST OF CHECHNIA AND DAGHESTAN* (LONDON: F. CASS, 1994)

BOULTON PAUL

WORDS STUART HADAWAY

SEEING IN THE DARK

From the autumn of 1941, Defiants received Airborne Interception (AI) radar for night combat. The transmitters were behind the turret, while the receiver and screen were in the cockpit.



The RAF's turret fighter was doomed to fight a war for which it wasn't designed

Based on a 1930s concept for intercepting unescorted German bombers crossing the North Sea, the Boulton Paul Defiant was doomed to fight a different war. The fall of France meant that their targets would instead be flying shorter distances, within range of escorting fighters of a comparable size to the Defiant, but which would not be weighed down with a turret and extra crewman. Although they enjoyed a few initial successes during the Dunkirk evacuation and the Battle of Britain, instead of becoming 'bomber destroyers', they rapidly became easy prey themselves.

With a gunner to concentrate on firing the guns while the pilot focussed on flying, and two pairs of eyes to scan the skies, the Defiant was a good idea which broke down in practicalities. Co-ordinating effectively between the crew was difficult, and the pilot had the difficult job of constantly working out how to manoeuvre to allow his gunner the best shot, making an already difficult task immensely complicated. For a while, the Defiant became an acceptable night fighter, although this was a stop-gap until better, multi-engine aircraft came along.

The last surviving Defiant can be viewed at the RAF Museum, Hendon, London



DEFIANT

RETRACTABLE FARING

The upper portion of the fuselage could be retracted in action, giving the turret a greater range of movement. When not in combat, the faring improved the Defiant's aerodynamics.

ONLY ARMAMENT

The gun turret was the Defiant's only weapon. It was heavy and cramped; the gunner had to wear a 'GQ Parasuit' – a body suit with the parachute built into the lining – rather than a conventional parachute. Even so, survival rates were low.

ADVANCED WING

The wings were built in sections, and were a simplified version of the elliptical design used on the Spitfire. They were more advanced than the Hurricane's wings but much quicker to build than those of the Spitfire.

BOULTON PAUL DEFIANT

COMMISSIONED:	1937
ORIGIN:	BRITISH
LENGTH:	10.8M (35FT 4IN)
WINGSPAN:	12M (39FT 4IN)
RANGE:	748KM (465 MILES)
ENGINE:	ROLLS ROYCE MERLIN MK. II 770KW (1,030HP)
CREW:	2
PRIMARY WEAPON:	4 X .303IN (7.7MM) BROWNING MACHINE GUNS IN A BOULTON PAUL A MK. ID TURRET

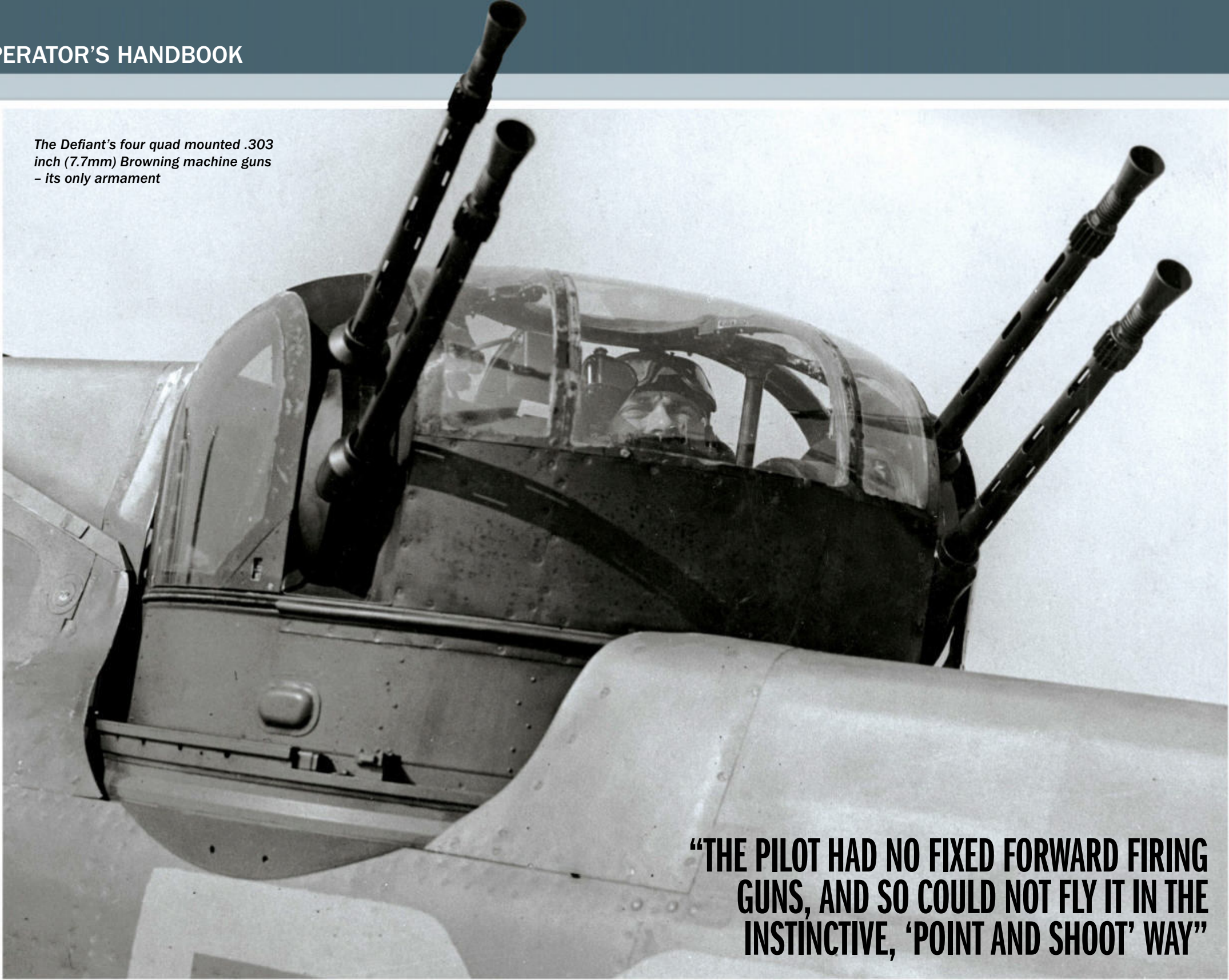
Illustrations: Alex Pang

Boulton Paul Defiant Mk.IIs

“INSTEAD OF BECOMING ‘BOMBER DESTROYERS’, THEY RAPIDLY BECAME EASY PREY THEMSE VES”



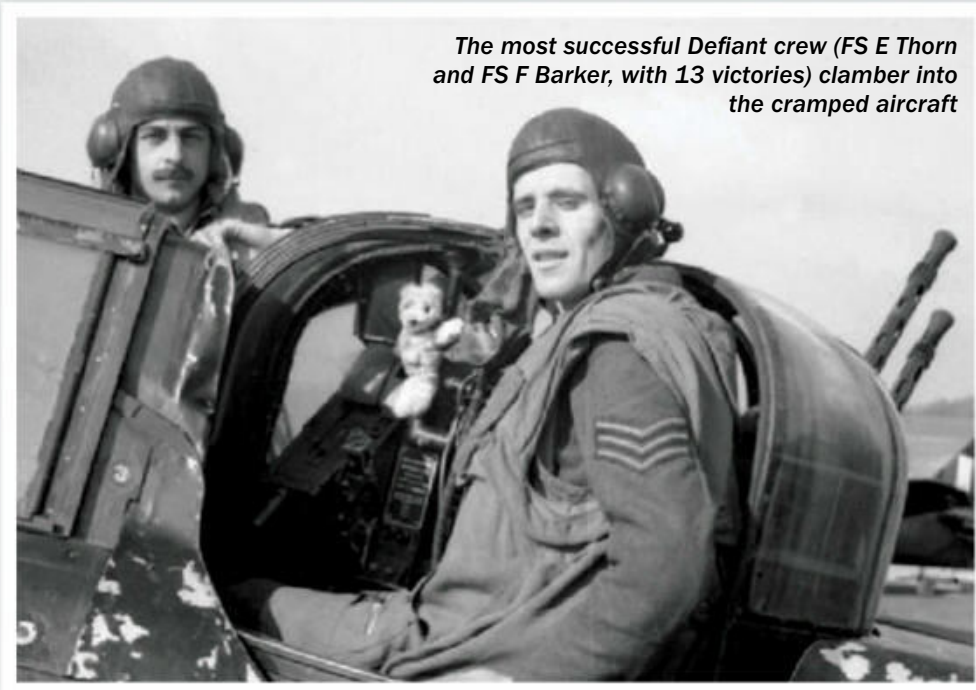
The Defiant's four quad mounted .303 inch (7.7mm) Browning machine guns – its only armament



“THE PILOT HAD NO FIXED FORWARD FIRING GUNS, AND SO COULD NOT FLY IT IN THE INSTINCTIVE, ‘POINT AND SHOOT’ WAY”

ARMAMENT

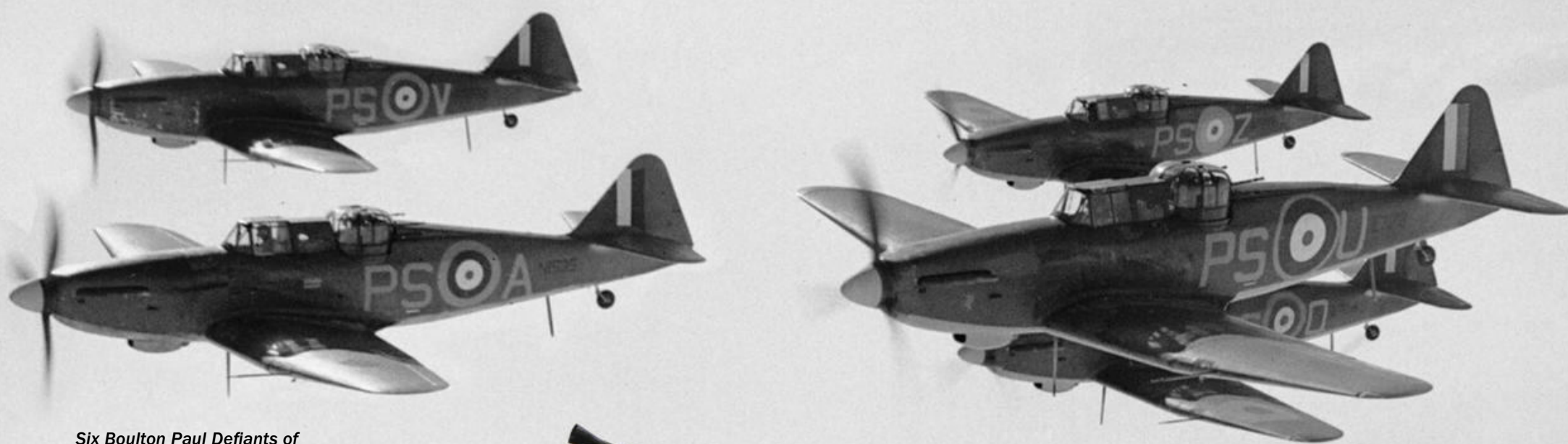
The Defiant was equipped with four .303in/7.7mm Browning machine guns in a Boulton Paul A Mk. II hydraulic turret. With the gunner and ammunition, it added 370kg (815lb) in weight to the aircraft. It could be locked to fire forwards (at 19° elevation), controlled by the pilot (who did not have a gunsight). Unlike the great fighters that inspired it, like the Bristol F2b Fighter, the pilot had no fixed forward firing guns, and so could not fly it in the instinctive, ‘point and shoot’ way. Instead, flying became a constant running exercise in mental trigonometry.



The most successful Defiant crew (FS E Thorn and FS F Barker, with 13 victories) clamber into the cramped aircraft



A gunner in his ‘GQ’ parasuit about to clamber into his cramped turret



Six Boulton Paul Defiants of No. 264 Squadron, flying in loose 'vic' formation

DESIGN

The Defiant was a conventional single-engine day fighter by design, with the addition of the turret behind the cockpit. A monocoque stressed skin structure, it had a reinforced structure to support the weight of the turret. The retractable faring also complicated the rear fuselage, but overall the design was very straight forward. The aircraft was designed to be built in sections and then assembled. This allowed extensive sub-contracting of parts, making construction relatively fast and simple.



The turret area of the Defiant needed extra structural support, and a mechanism to retract the faring (as here) to allow complete movement of the guns



Image: Alan Wilson

The RAF Museum dismantle their Defiant in 2016 for conservation, showing some of the modular structure of the type

RAF ground crew working on the engine of a Boulton Paul Defiant, 1941

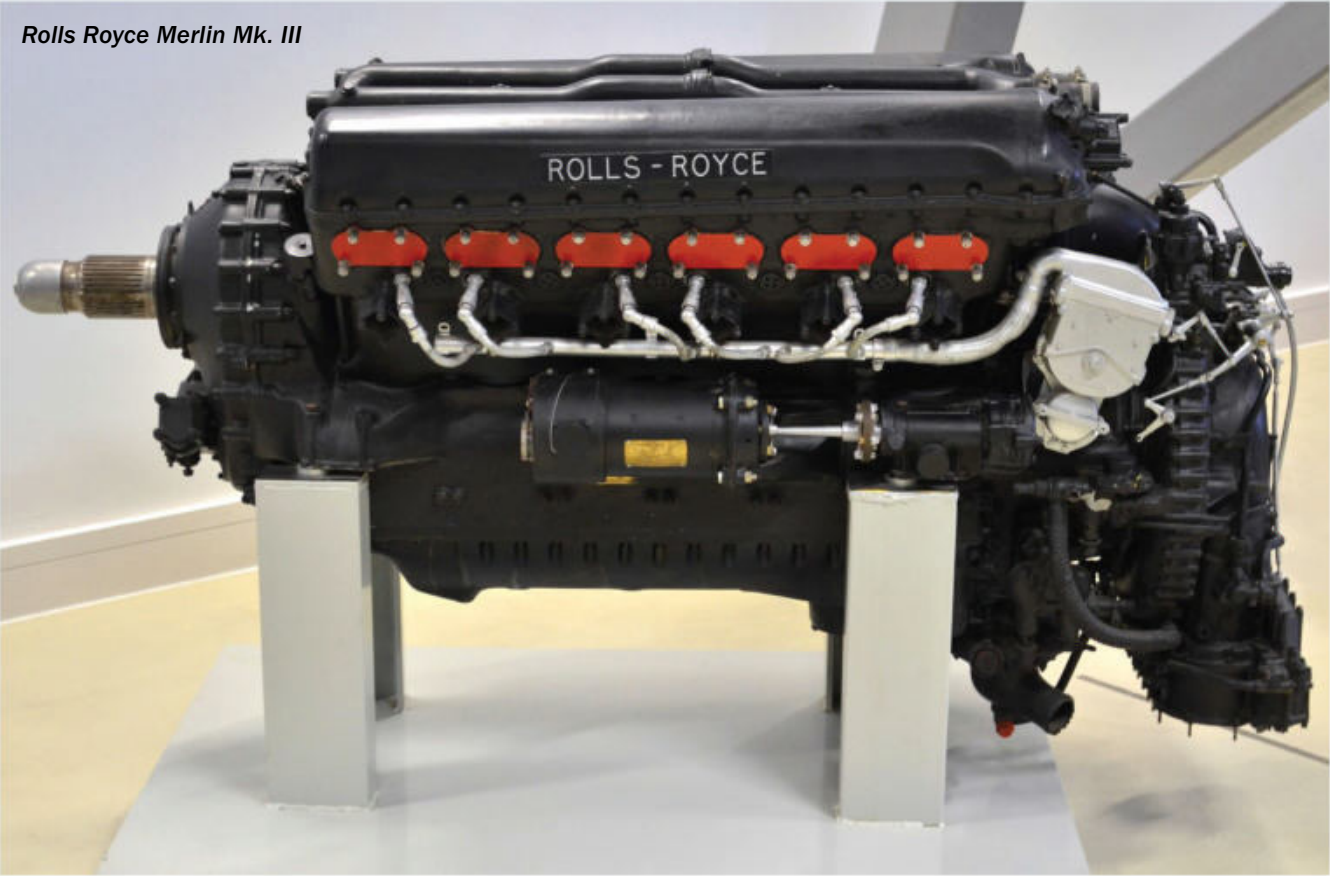


ENGINE

The Defiant Mk. I used a Rolls Royce Merlin Mk. III, a 770kW (1,030hp) 12 cylinder inline engine that was the first Merlin to have a standardised propeller shaft suitable for either de Havilland or Rotol propellers. It was the

same engine used in the Supermarine Spitfire and Hawker Hurricane, but unlike those two excellent fighters it was expected to haul much heavier weights in the Defiant, impairing performance. Later, the Defiant Mk. II and IIIs had more powerful Merlin Mk. XX 1,280 hp (954 kW) engines.

Rolls Royce Merlin Mk. III



COCKPIT

The cockpit layout was basically that of the standard day fighter type, cramped but functional. The throttle was on the left and the most essential flight instruments were in a central panel surrounded by the less vital ones around the edges. The major differences were the lack of a gun sight, and the control column was attached to the frame of the adjustable seat, so the column moved up and down with the seat. Later, an Airborne Interception receiver and screen were included for the pilot to operate the air-to-air radar.



Image: Alan Wilson

Apart from a few modifications and the lack of a gunsight, the Defiant's cockpit followed standard RAF single-seat fighter layout.



A formation of Defiants of
No. 264 Squadron, August 1940

SERVICE HISTORY

The Defiant Mk. I entered service with No. 264 Squadron, Royal Air Force, in December 1939, and became operational the following March. All too quickly, the type was sent into action over the English Channel and the north coast of Europe in late May and early June, with some success but not without significant losses. As the war moved to British skies in July and August 1940, losses continued to mount

even as more squadrons became operational. In mid-August, the Defiants were withdrawn from day use, and switched to night fighting.

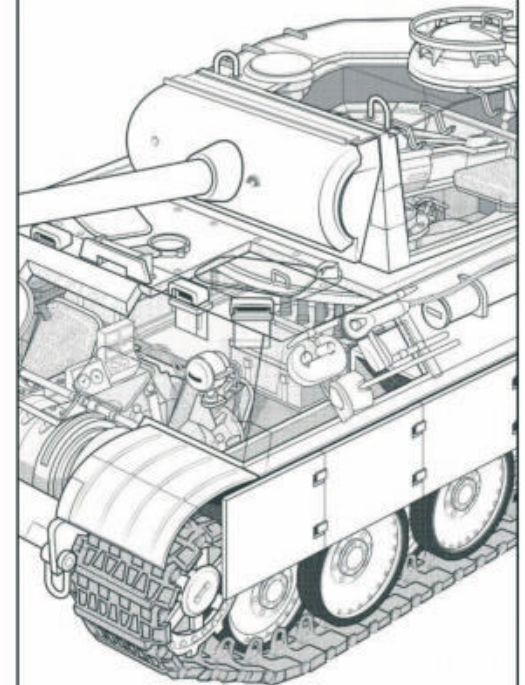
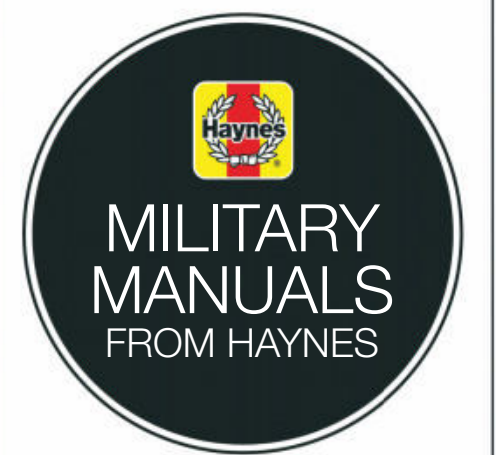
Although less than ideal as night fighters they were capable, and the best available for some time. Over the summer of 1942 they were replaced by faster, twin-engined aircraft. From mid-1942, Defiants were used in an Air/Sea Rescue role (for about a year) and as target-tugs until May 1945, when the type was withdrawn from service.

“AS THE WAR MOVED TO BRITISH SKIES IN JULY AND AUGUST 1940, LOSSES CONTINUED TO MOUNT EVEN AS MORE SQUADRONS BECAME OPERATIONAL. IN MID-AUGUST, THE DEFIANTS WERE WITHDRAWN FROM DAY USE, AND SWITCHED TO NIGHT FIGHTING”



A Boulton Paul Defiant TT1 target tug

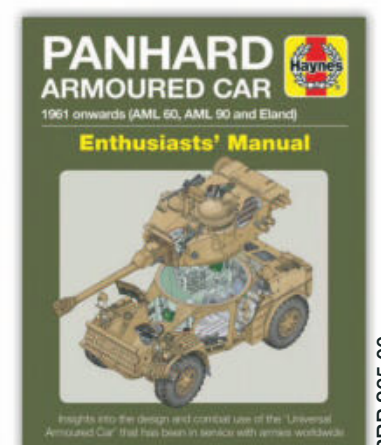
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DEFENDING THE FALKLANDS

PART I

THE GATHERING STORM

British troops surrender to the Argentineans at Port Stanley, Falkland Islands



In this new three-part series, historian **Michael Jones** draws upon the recollections of **Major Mike Norman**, commander of Stanley's Royal Marine garrison, as well as recently released government archives, to reveal a hitherto unsung period of the 1982 conflict. Here, Part I focuses on the role of the garrison (Naval Party 8901), the warning signs evident to those on the ground and the rapidly deteriorating international situation in the last days of March 1982

On 1 April 1982 Major Mike Norman took command of a small garrison of around 70 Royal Marines stationed on the Falkland Islands. He was looking forward to a quiet year's posting, with time for some adventure training, fishing and exploring the rugged interior of the islands. His Foreign Office briefings and their low-level intelligence summaries gave him no major cause for concern, forecasting a slow ratcheting up of economic sanctions by the Argentine military junta of President Leopoldo Galtieri. But that afternoon, at 2.25pm Falklands Time, a dramatic message came through from London, "We now have apparently reliable evidence that an Argentinian task force will gather off Cape Pembroke [the easternmost point of the Falkland Islands] early tomorrow morning. You will wish to make your dispositions accordingly."

This brief announcement left everyone aghast. Why hadn't such a threat been properly anticipated? Falklander John Smith noted in his diary, "Now it has all become suddenly clear why we have had regular overflights by Argentine aircraft. But the enormity of the news has left everyone absolutely stunned. How could an invasion force be assembled, put to sea and then be off the Falklands for at least ten hours before it was discovered? We are living in the last quarter of the 20th century and it is quite incredible that this has been allowed to happen. Something has gone desperately wrong somewhere."

For nearly 150 years the United Kingdom had held continuous possession of the Falklands Islands, adding to these the far-flung dependencies of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. The remote colonial outpost in the South Atlantic was over 8,000 miles from London and yet its small population of just over 1,800 was fiercely proud to be British. However, Argentina believed that the islands it had named 'Las Malvinas' rightfully belonged to her, and was now intending to seize them by force.

Rex Hunt, the Falklands' Governor, looked at Major Norman and said, "What do you think of that? We've called their bluff for nearly 20 years – and now it looks like you and I are the poor buggers who are going to be on the receiving end." For a moment Norman was too taken aback to speak. Then he gathered himself, looked at his watch and replied, "It's after mid-day – this is no April Fools' prank." It wasn't. Within hours, he and his Marines would be fighting for their lives.

The story of the Falklands War tends to begin with the dispatch of a British Task Force to regain the Islands from the Argentine invaders. The defence of the Falklands' capital, Stanley, by a heavily outnumbered party of Royal Marines on the morning of 2 April 1982 forms only a brief prelude to the tale and those accounts which do touch upon it are often misleading or inaccurate. Perhaps the shame felt over the sudden loss of the islands – and the humiliating images of Marines forced to lie face down on the road outside Government House – still lingers. In reality, there is nothing to be ashamed of.

Naval Party 8901

At the end of March 1965 a small British garrison was permanently established on the Falkland Islands. By 1982 its strength was a senior captain or major and 42 Royal Marines. It was a yearly posting – and the isolated environment did not suit everyone. The population of Stanley was a little over a thousand, there were no cinemas, fast food restaurants or nightclubs and only six shops and three pubs. Marines volunteered for the Falklands for a variety of reasons. For some it was about raising their level of fitness, for others, simply an opportunity to save money. And yet, the sheer remoteness of the place was also the source of its attraction. Corporal Nick Williams said, "If you liked the outdoor life, wilderness and wildlife, the Falklands was wonderful – and I found its people

"THE FIGHT FOR STANLEY WAS CONDUCTED WITH OUTSTANDING BRAVERY AND PROFESSIONALISM IN APPALLINGLY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES. IT DESERVES TO BE REMEMBERED WITH PRIDE"



Royal Marines of
Naval Party 8901

Image: Mike Norman

Image: Getty

friendly and hospitable. The trick was finding something to do.” And Corporal Geordie Gill added, “I fell in love with the islands and went back at every opportunity.”

The Royal Marine barracks at Moody Brook – just over two miles west of Stanley – was reached by a bumpy drive along a pot-holed track. It was something of an institution. A huge reinforced concrete complex, its nine buildings were put up during World War I to house the diesels and generators of a naval signal station. Evacuated by the navy in 1927, the site was briefly resurrected during the Second World War before falling into disrepair once more in the conflict’s aftermath. By 1965 it was ruinous – yet it would become home to Naval Party 8901.

Major Ewen Southby-Tailyour said frankly, “It was a pigsty. The barracks was littered with large wooden shipping containers. Some buildings let the rain in and a cracked sewer ran through the food store. Vehicle tracks gouged out deep canals of mud and the camp was surrounded on all sides by scenes of rust and decay.”

Yet most of its occupants liked the place – and made it their own. Detachment Sergeant Major Bill Muir remembered, “Moody Brook had an atmosphere quite different from any other Royal Marine barracks I had been to. The Marines had been given a free hand in decorating their rooms and all were wonderfully

“WHEN THE ENDURANCE COMES INTO THE HARBOUR, FLYING THE FLAG, I HAVE THE FEELING THAT WE ARE STILL PART OF GREAT BRITAIN”

different from each other. Some would have competed in an art gallery with the works of Salvador Dali.”

Nevertheless, a long-awaited rebuild, planned since 1978, was finally announced in 1980, a development watched with considerable interest in Argentina. The military junta believed that a modern barracks would signal Britain’s continued military commitment to the Islands.

HMS Endurance

The garrison had Royal Navy support. HMS Endurance was the South Atlantic ice patrol ship and amongst other tasks, acted as the Falkland Islands gunship and was a ferry to transport new parties of Royal Marines to the islands. The ship had her own detachment of 13 Marines, two Oerlikon machine guns and carried two Wasp helicopters, armed with AS12

surface missiles. It also possessed excellent radio signalling equipment. It was painted bright red and was known affectionately as the ‘Red Plum’. It was a powerful symbolic presence. One resident of Stanley said simply, “When the Endurance comes into the harbour, flying the flag, I have the feeling that we are still part of Great Britain.”

Alarms and excursions

For the Marines of Naval Party 8901, the terrain and weather of the Falklands presented a particular challenge in the interior of the islands, known as the ‘Camp’. It was painfully slow going across country, with an absence of roads, a sparse population and a lack of food, water and repair facilities outside the tiny coastal settlements. More than 85 per cent of the land was covered in peat bog. “We have undertaken our first patrols,” Corporal Willie Clayton wrote. “Many of these places are isolated and remote – and it can take a lot of hard work to get there.” Facing such difficulties, the Royal Marines often relied upon the cargo ship MV Forrest (chartered from the Falklands Government) to make their journeys. These regular patrols were important. It was about keeping up morale, so that the Islanders felt that they were being protected.

On the ground, there were frequent fears about Argentine intentions. Corporal John





Royal Marine garrison of the Falkland Islands evicted by the Argentine invaders, with the Falkland Islands flag outside Government House, Port Stanley

Adams of Naval Party 8901 (1974-75) recalled, "There were continuous alarms of one sort or another. We stepped up our patrols of the outlying settlements as there were real concerns that Argentina would make an unauthorised landing and take hostages."

However, Whitehall never drew up a clear contingency plan to deal with the threat of an invasion. A Foreign Office memorandum of 2 February 1982 confessed that "there was confusion in the Ministry of Defence about the role of the Royal Marines garrison in the event of an attack on the Falkland Islands".

The buck was then passed to the Marines' commander, whom the FO hoped "would have a clear idea of his responsibilities", without offering him any further guidance on what those responsibilities actually were.

Into the unknown

By the time of this memorandum the British government had made two ill-fated decisions. In late June 1981 the Defence Review decided to scrap the HMS Endurance at the end of her tour of service the following April. The sole patrol vessel in the South Atlantic would be lost, and with no plans to replace her, the Royal Marine garrison on the Falklands would be without a support ship. There were strong protests in Britain and from the Falklands. But John Nott, Secretary of State for Defence, refused to

budge. Argentina drew her own conclusions from this economy measure, stating in an intelligence summary that "Britain was abandoning her protection of the Falklands".

This assessment was reinforced by the MOD's decision in January 1982 to halt its planned rebuilding of the Moody Brook barracks. This was perhaps the decisive moment. For the military junta a pattern seemed to be falling into place and it now resolved to act. A pretext was needed – and in March it decided to engineer an incident on the island of South Georgia, where Argentine scrap metal merchants, supposedly clearing out one of the abandoned whaling stations, would raise the national flag.

In his last Foreign Office briefing, in an open-plan office in Whitehall, Major Mike Norman was told that the negotiations between Britain and Argentina, held in New York, had broken down and that an escalation of economic sanctions was now likely. Fuel supplies might be withdrawn, and the air service could be cut off, leaving Stanley isolated. "They are of course a very unpredictable race," the official added, "but are unlikely to take the military option while their dispute with Chile over the Beagle Channel [a border dispute over islands on the southern edge of Tierra del Fuego] remains unresolved." Norman was not entirely convinced but thought to himself "if things were more serious, surely they would warn me?"

On 26 March 1982 Major Norman and the new Naval Party 8901 began its journey to the Falklands. The Endurance and a party of Royal Marines had been sent to South Georgia, in an effort to sort out the situation with the Argentine scrap merchants, and the British Antarctic Survey ship John Biscoe was diverted to bring the Marines from Montevideo, in Uruguay (where they had been flown from London), to Stanley. Two days into the voyage there was a threatening moment when an Argentine Hercules aircraft circled around the ship, before flying so low over the deck that the pilot's face was clearly visible. But the sense of menace quickly passed.

It was 29 March and Major Norman recalled, "The mood of my men was good. Our destination was now only a matter of hours away. We ran a sweepstake on how long it would take to get through the Narrows [the straits that run from Port William into Port Stanley]."

But the Biscoe's captain, Malcolm Phelps, a skilful navigator who knew the South Atlantic well, had an intuition something was seriously wrong.

He drew Norman aside and said quietly but urgently, "Surely we are not going to war over these desolate Islands?"



The Falklands War – There And Back Again: The Story Of Naval Party 8901 by Mike Norman and Michael Jones is available now from www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

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THE ARGENTINEAN INVASION COMMENCES, AND THE MARINES ARE IMMEDIATELY PUSHED TO THEIR LIMIT. READ PART II IN HISTORY OF WAR ISSUE 73, ON SALE 3 OCTOBER

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An aerial view of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea with the River Thames and Battersea Power Station in the background

== CHELSEA HISTORY FESTIVAL, 2019 ==

The Royal Hospital will be playing host to its inaugural history festival with dozens of events including talks by distinguished historians and a WWII veteran

Running between 9-13 October 2019, the first Chelsea History Festival will be taking place along the Royal Hospital Road in London. This street is the location of the festival's founder venues: the National Army Museum, Royal Hospital Chelsea and Chelsea Physic Garden. These three establishments all have unique historical pedigrees beginning with the National Army Museum that tells the stories of British soldiers over 350 years. The Royal Hospital Chelsea is an iconic institution that was founded in 1682 and is the home of the famous Chelsea Pensioners while the Chelsea Physic Garden is even older. Founded in 1673, this green oasis has a botanical collection of global historical significance.

For these reasons, Chelsea is the ideal place to hold a new history festival. This five-day event will be bringing the past to life through a programme of world-class speakers, historians and performers. There will be 35 events including a mixture of free and ticketed talks, concerts and family activities. The first day on 9 October is also the 75th anniversary of Operation Market Garden. A special audience will commemorate this with Arnhem veteran (and *History of War* interviewee) Victor Gregg followed by a lecture delivered by renowned historian Sir Antony Beevor. Other military themed talks will include Sir Max Hastings discussing his new book *Chastise: The Dambusters Story, 1943* and David Nott will describe his experiences as a surgeon during the Syrian Civil War.

Historian James Holland, the founder of the Chalke Valley History Festival, has been instrumental on consulting on the schedule for Chelsea, "It is great to see the Chelsea History Festival join the calendar of history events in Britain. Royal Hospital Road in Chelsea is so rich in heritage and provides a magnificent setting at the heart of one of the great cities of the world. Being so easily accessible to many millions of people makes it an ideal location in which to share the stories that have shaped our world."

The festival is also supported by *Country & Town House* magazine. Managing Director Jeremy Isaac says, "We are delighted and proud to partner with the Chelsea History Festival in its inaugural year. The team has created a fabulous line-up of events, talks and activities with which I know our readers are going to be very engaged. I am certain that the festival is going to become a key date in the London cultural diary for years to follow."



Children meet a First World War re-enactor. One of the events will include marching drills for soldiers from 1914-18

FOR MORE INFORMATION: WWW.CHELSEAHISTORYFESTIVAL.COM



Commander Mark Walker receives the signed print from Mrs Linda Oxford



Ted Briggs (right) and Robert Tilburn (left) were two of only three survivors from the sinking of HMS Hood. Briggs was later awarded an MBE

A RARE NAVAL DONATION

A signed print of HMS Hood from one of the doomed ship's few survivors has been donated to the Royal Navy

HMS Hood was the Royal Navy's last battle cruiser. Commissioned in 1920, she was almost obsolete by the outbreak of WWII. During the Battle of the Denmark Strait on 24 May 1941 she engaged the German battleship Bismarck but sustained a direct hit. Hood swiftly sank with the loss of 1,415 and there were only three survivors, including Ted Briggs.

Years later, Briggs signed a fine print of HMS Hood that belonged to John Oxford, a former naval trainer at the shore establishment HMS Collingwood. His widow Linda rediscovered the print when she was clearing out her late husband's possessions and she has decided to donate it to the establishment. The print is particularly significant because Briggs was the last survivor of Hood when he died in 2008.

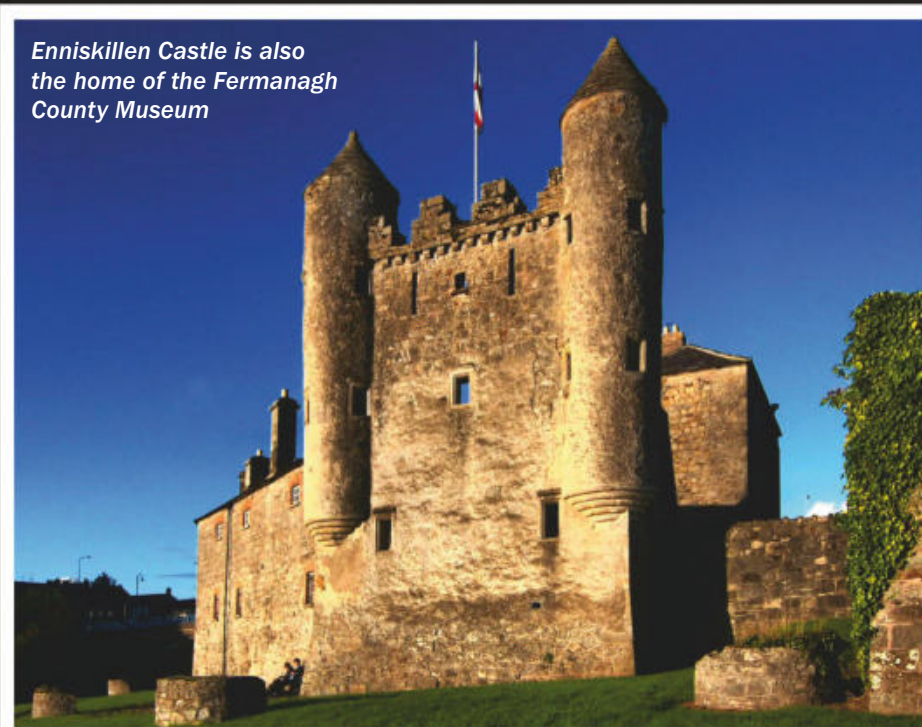
Mrs Oxford explains, "I knew my husband had spent time here during his naval career and I'm pleased I've been able to do something to remember that. I spoke to both of my sons and they agreed this is a good decision and I hope my late husband would be pleased too."

The commanding officer of HMS Collingwood, Commander Mark Walker, received the print on behalf of the establishment from Mrs Oxford and expressed his gratitude, "HMS Collingwood is very grateful to you for donating this print which means so much. Our heritage is important to us at the Navy's largest training establishment because we instil in our trainees a sense of their heritage and what it means to be in the Royal Navy."

THE INNISKILLINGS AT ENNISKILLEN

A medieval keep is the picturesque location of a museum dedicated to County Fermanagh's regiments

Enniskillen Castle is also the home of the Fermanagh County Museum



Enniskillen Castle was built in 1428 and as the stronghold of the Maguires who were the Gaelic chiefs of County Fermanagh. It was heavily besieged during the Nine Years' War in the late 16th century and remodelled as a barracks in 1796. It became the home of the 27th Regiment of Foot that eventually evolved into the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers in 1881. As an infantry regiment, the Fusiliers saw extensive service in the British Army and won many battle honours until its amalgamation with other Irish regiments in 1968. The barracks itself continued to be used by other regiments, including the North Irish Horse, before it was decommissioned in 1950.

The castle is splendidly located on the bank of the River Erne and is now home to the Inniskillings Museum, which tells the story of both the Fusiliers and the 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards. The museum is located inside the castle keep and the old cavalry stables.

The history of both regiments dates back to 1689 and visitors can see an array of 18th-19th century barrack buildings as well as the medieval keep and the 17th century watergate. The museum contains a fine collection of period uniforms, swords, guns and medals as well as a Bren gun carrier and a howitzer.

FOR MORE VISIT: WWW.INNISKILLINGSMUSEUM.COM

HISTORY of WAR **REVIEWS**

Our pick of the latest military history films and books

WEREWOLF



LIBERATED BY THE RED ARMY, A GROUP OF TRAUMATISED KIDS FIND THEMSELVES ALL ALONE IN A FOREST WITH RAVENOUS DOGS

Director: Adrian Panek **Distributor:** Eureka Entertainment

Stars: Kamil Polnisiak, Sonia Mietieleca, Danuta Stenka, Nicolas Pryzgoda **UK Release:** 20 September

Adrian Panek's WW2-themed horror film begins with the Nazis in retreat. It's early February 1945 at Gross-Rosen concentration camp, Stalin's Red Army not far away and closing in fast. The night sky is lit up by gunfire, thick plumes of smoke from nearby artillery explosions wafts through the air. SS guards mercilessly execute prisoners, even as they prepare to bolt from the scene. A woman is chased down by an Alsatian and has her throat ripped out.

In a bunkhouse, two Germans stand and laugh at severely weakened men and women doing numerous press-ups, amused by their obedient attitude. Opening on a panorama of bedlam and cruelty, the total absence of humanity is strikingly presented in both terms of action on screen and the potent visual metaphor of human beings reduced to trained animals. Although the Russians will soon liberate those

left alive at Gross-Rosen from Nazi tyranny, a group of starving, orphaned Polish children will face a new nightmare in the deep, dark woods.

An imaginative, original and thoroughly gripping depiction of post-traumatic stress and the psychological struggle to regain a sense of personality and individuality after years of ceaseless terror and debasement, *Werewolf* presents such themes in the guise of a narrative echoing Grimm fairy tales. The film, too, exists firmly in the subgenre of Second World War movies told from the innocent perspective of children; a rich collection of titles which has produced plenty of classics down the years, such as *Ivan's Childhood*, *Come And See*, *Au Revoir les Enfants* and *Empire Of The Sun*, to name a few. In utilising what is essentially a stylised genre story – think Iain Serrailier's *The Silver Sword* crossed with Stephen King's *Cujo* –

director Panek provides the audience with plenty of traditional thrills and nail-biting sequences, while making a serious point about the shock of freedom in the early days of the Reich's fall; where those who barely survived were met with a range of bewildering circumstances and new threats.

The young cast is excellent, Panek getting quality performances from every child actor. Oleh Shcherbyna's Lonka, who we first see in Gross-Rosen, observing how Nazis command their hounds to maul prisoners to death, is the standout. Lonka's motives are constantly teased as ambiguous. Is he the group's saviour or their destructor? The blank-faced, bespectacled boy's outsider status makes his position at the orphanage precarious (he's considered an odd duck, much like Simon in William Golding's 1954 classic novel, *Lord Of The Flies*).

Shcherbyna's subtle acting provides extra amounts of tension. His character's dissociative state and the emotional tug between self-preservation and selflessness means he is difficult to read. Not only is Lonka pivotal to the plot's outcome, he embodies the film's important humanist themes and tragic subtext.

Werewolf, in lesser hands, could have been daft and exploitative, but Panek has crafted an exciting and tautly staged genre piece, boasting an intelligent script, tiptop performances, lean pacing and gothic-horror cinematography. Each element combines to riveting effect. **MC**



ENTERTAINING THE TROOPS 1939-1945

A WELCOME STUDY OF THE MORE LIGHT-HEARTED MOMENTS AWAY FROM THE FRONTLINE

Author: Kiri Bloom Waldon

Publisher: Shire Publications **Price:** £7.67

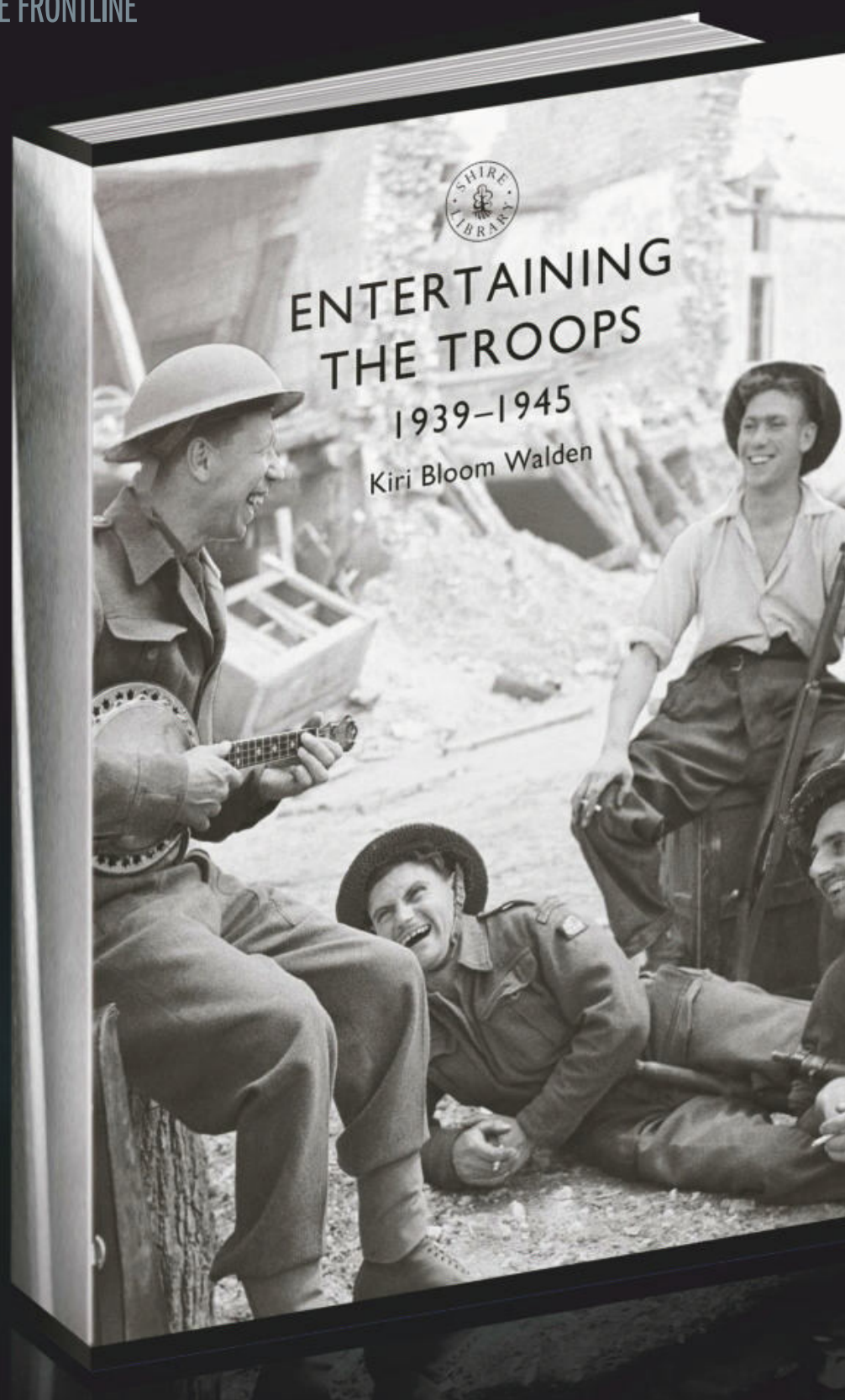
The idea of entertaining the troops during war has long been seen as vital for keeping up morale and breaking the monotony of military life when not on the frontline. Whether you were a soldier, sailor, airman, officer or enlisted man, the need for enjoyment and a temporary escape from the harsh realities of war was essential for maintaining mental health. Without it, servicemen and women could soon become exhausted and less effective in their duties or worse.

During the Second World War, entertainment groups such as the Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA), the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA), and Stars in Battledress (SIB), amongst others, visited the troops in every theatre they were deployed and treated them to one form of entertainment or another.

Quite often, the entertainment laid on would be done by the stars of the day, their very presence providing a little welcome link to home for the homesick servicemen and women. Today, we remember well-known names such as Gracie Fields, George Formby and Vera Lynn very well, but they, and others like them, often began their journey to stardom from their time entertaining the troops at home and abroad. Of course, sometimes the entertainers could not get to the troops – prisoners of war being an example – and so the troops would create the entertainment themselves, putting on their own shows and pantomimes.

Author Kiri Bloom Waldon, who teaches film and cultural studies at Oxford University, has written a short but highly informative book that explores the work of ENSA, CEMA, SIB and other entertainment organisations that worked tirelessly to ensure the men and women at the front got the relaxation and enjoyment they so badly needed. *Entertaining The Troops 1939-1945* provides the reader with an intriguing insight into this lesser known but vital social aspect of the Second World War. **MS**

“QUITE OFTEN, THE ENTERTAINMENT LAID ON WOULD BE DONE BY THE STARS OF THE DAY, THEIR VERY PRESENCE PROVIDING A LITTLE WELCOME LINK TO HOME FOR THE HOMESICK SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN”



Gracie Fields with RAF personnel in France, December 1939.
Far Left: George Formby entertains British troops in France 1940

THE ART OF PROWLING

AN ENJOYABLE, IF BRIEF WINDOW ON THE DARK ARTS OF THE HOME GUARD

Author: Col. G. A. Wade **Publisher:** Royal Armouries **Price:** £6.99

This curious little book offers advice for members of the Home Guard on patrol duty during World War II. Originally published in 1940, it has been reissued in hardback by the Royal Armouries.

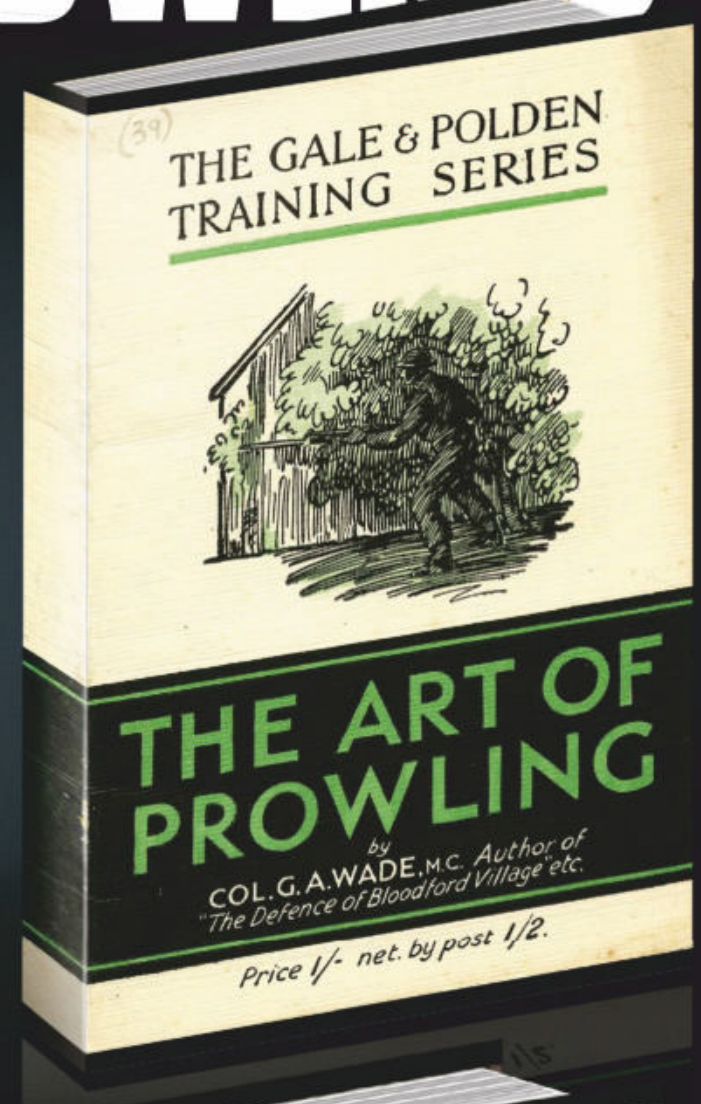
It is an attractive little book, packed with simple illustrations, but its content is extremely meagre, having just 16 pages of information from Colonel George Wade, a veteran of the First World War. This covers techniques for patrolling, how to challenge a suspicious character and even how to bayonet a man from behind, "Don't stick it up his backside because he will bellow like a bull."

Other tips include doubling back on your route to outwit anyone following you, effective use of shadows and the need to act like a 'tough guy' to overawe an opponent.

The main point of Wade's pamphlet is that the British soldier should not feel it is unsporting to be cunning. Prowling, as opposed to regular patrolling, was the key to effectively countering the risk posed by enemy agents, parachutists or other undesirables. It was also, according to Wade, so enjoyable that the time spent out on patrol would fly by.

With its eccentric style, this is an enjoyable read, albeit one that is over far too quickly. Wade produced other pamphlets during the war, including titles on house-to-house fighting, road blocks and the defence of small village and towns. Some of these are also available, but a larger volume, including all of the related pamphlets, would have been desirable and would have offered much better value for money. **DS**

"PROWLING, AS OPPOSED TO REGULAR PATROLLING, WAS THE KEY TO EFFECTIVELY COUNTERING THE RISK POSED BY ENEMY AGENTS, PARACHUTISTS OR OTHER UNDESIRABLES"



WAITING FOR WAR: BRITAIN 1939-1940

A WELCOME STUDY OF THE 'PHONEY WAR' AND THE IMPACT IT HAD ON BRITAIN

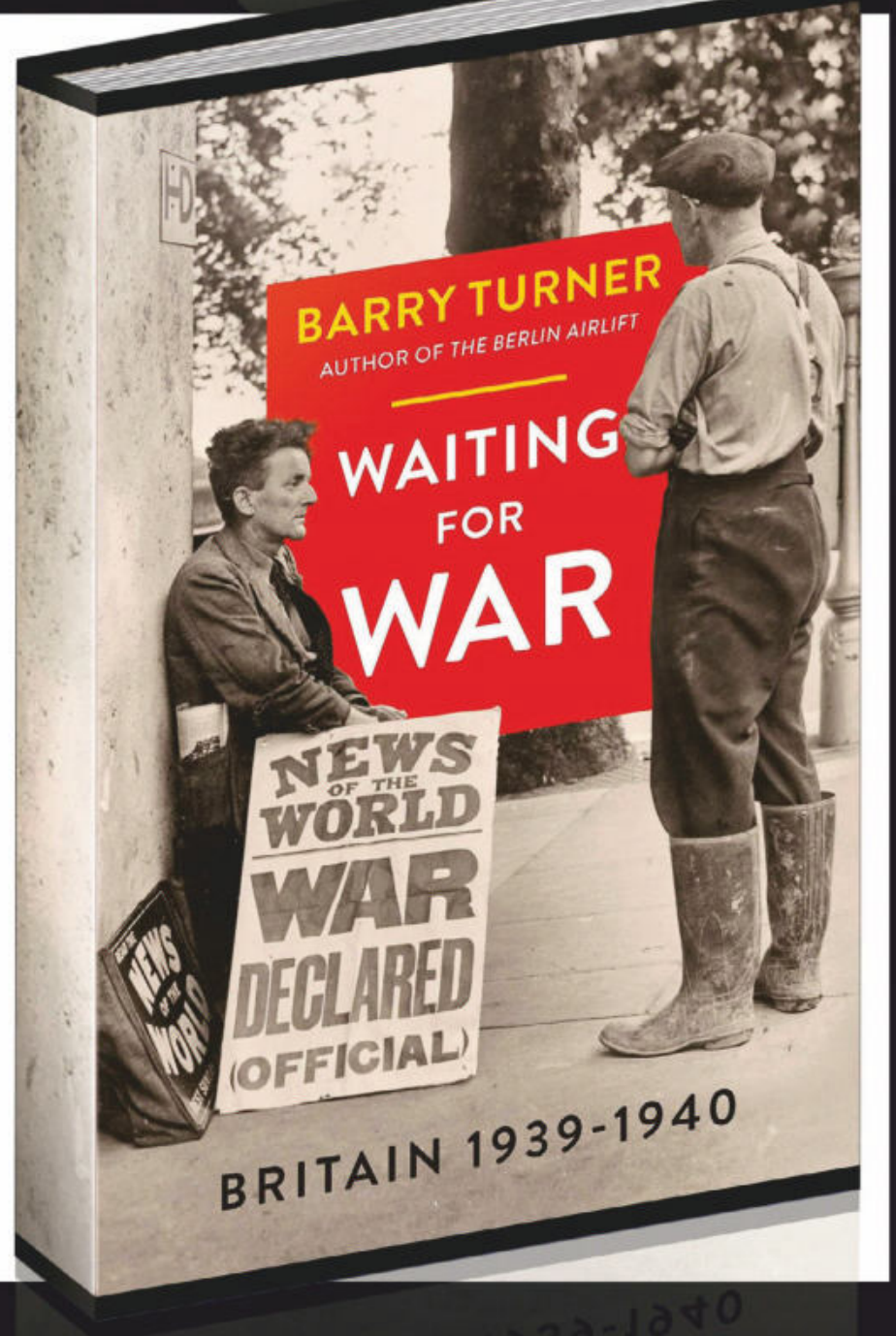
Writer: Barry Turner **Publisher:** Icon Books **Price:** £20

The opening phase of World War II, the so-called 'Phoney War', tends to be glossed over in most histories. It is understandable that writers have been more interested in events on the continent, but the period in Britain was a fascinating one. Barry Turner has now explored this curious phase that came after the war officially started, but before it directly impacted upon Britain.

This is one of those books that can delight a reader with new facts, and the situation in Britain was sometimes comical, sometimes tragic, but always interesting. For a start, there was a woeful misunderstanding over the speed with which the war would start and the initial impact. Massive air raids were predicted from the start and it was estimated that 50,000 people would die in London during the first month of the war.

This apocalyptic vision led to the disastrous decision to turn people out of hospital beds to make room for the anticipated casualties. Bizarrely, even the seriously ill were turfed out of the wards, prompting a comment from a hospital chaplain, "Why should it have been considered less disastrous for anyone to die untreated of cancer, appendicitis or pneumonia than as a result of a bomb?"

Turner tends to use quotes a little too freely however, and some pages are taken up almost entirely with extended quotes, which means that the author's voice is too often swamped. Still, this remains a fascinating study of the flawed and sometimes clumsy planning for a war that seemed to take forever to arrive. **DS**



WOMEN IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

A USEFUL INTRODUCTION TO THE ROLES PLAYED BY WOMEN IN WARTIME

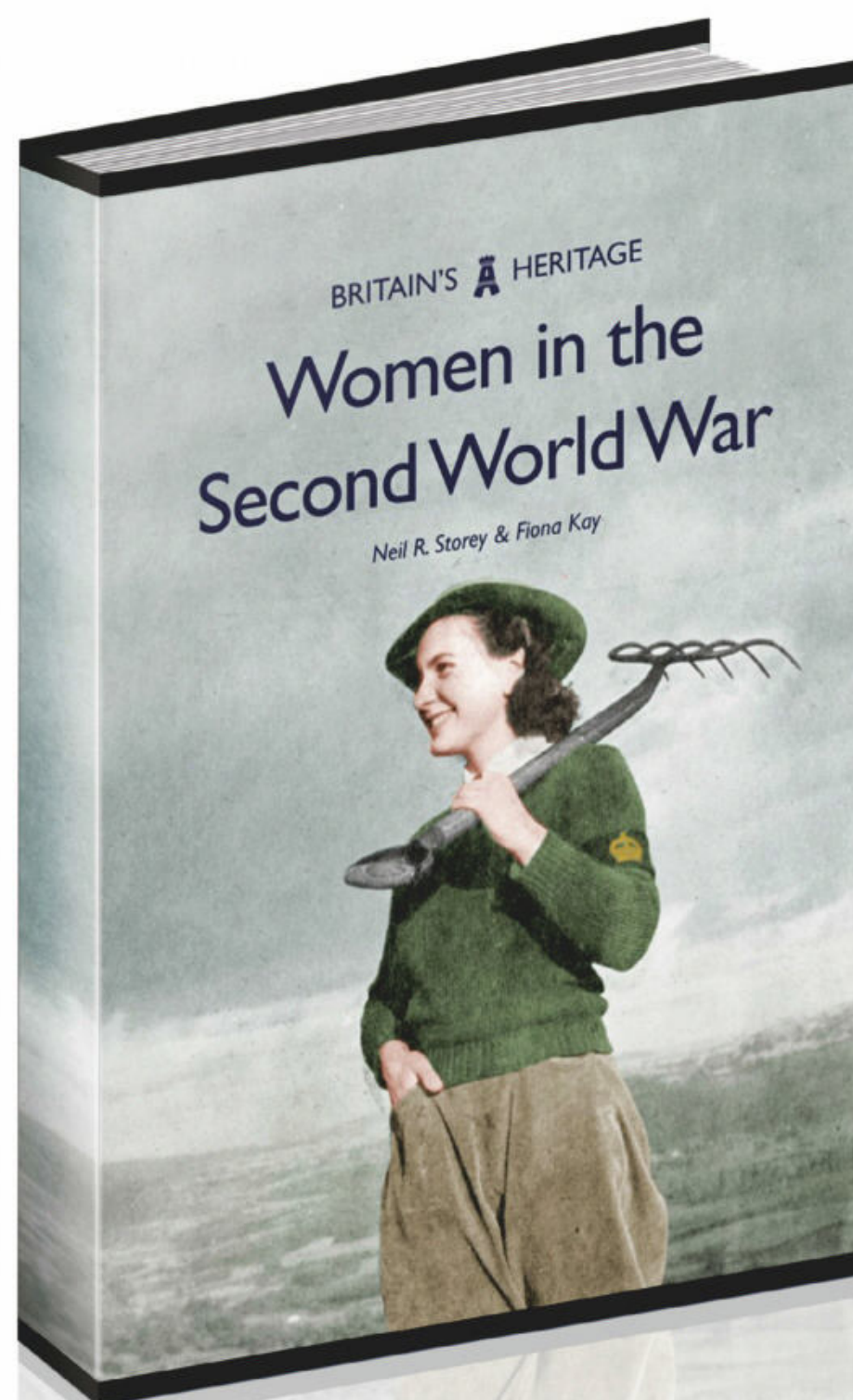
Authors: Neil R. Storey and Fiona Kay

Publisher: Amberley Publishing **Price:** £8.99

The role played by women in the Second World War still tends to be overlooked amid the campaign and battle narratives of conventional history. This slim volume aims to act as an introduction to the many ways women made a vital contribution to the war effort.

There is no attempt at an overarching story – each of the varied ways in which women served their country is dealt with in its own section. In this manner, the reader can learn about service in uniform, in civil defence, on the home front, in various areas of war work and on the land. Organisations such as the NAAFI (Navy, Army and Air Forces Institutes), branches of the military including the Wrens (Navy) and the WAAF (Air Force) and the venerable Women's Institute are covered, and there is an interesting section on the end of the war, when the men came home and women were expected to return to their pre-war status. Due to the limited space (the book is just 64 pages long), this tends to be a whistle-stop tour of a subject that would benefit from much deeper analysis. As an introduction, however, it is accessible and works well.

The book does include a useful list of suggested titles for further reading and places to visit to learn more about the subject. It is also illustrated by an excellent array of period prints, including war-time adverts and propaganda posters, some of which offer valuable insights into the mindset of the times. **DS**



**“A WHISTLE-STOP TOUR
OF A SUBJECT THAT WOULD BENEFIT
FROM MUCH DEEPER ANALYSIS”**



*Women from
the ATS enjoy a
cigarette break*



*Land Girl Doreen
Bacchus at the
Women's Timber
Corps training
camp in Suffolk*

OPERATION MARKET GARDEN

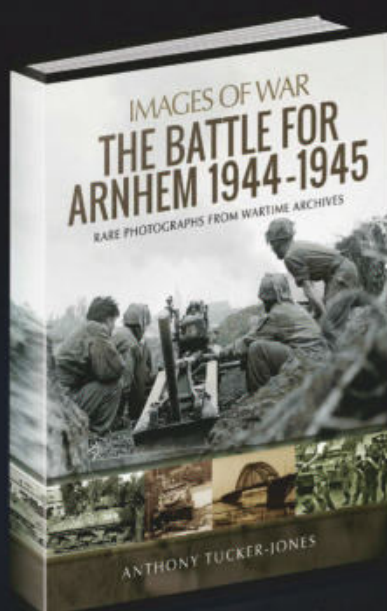
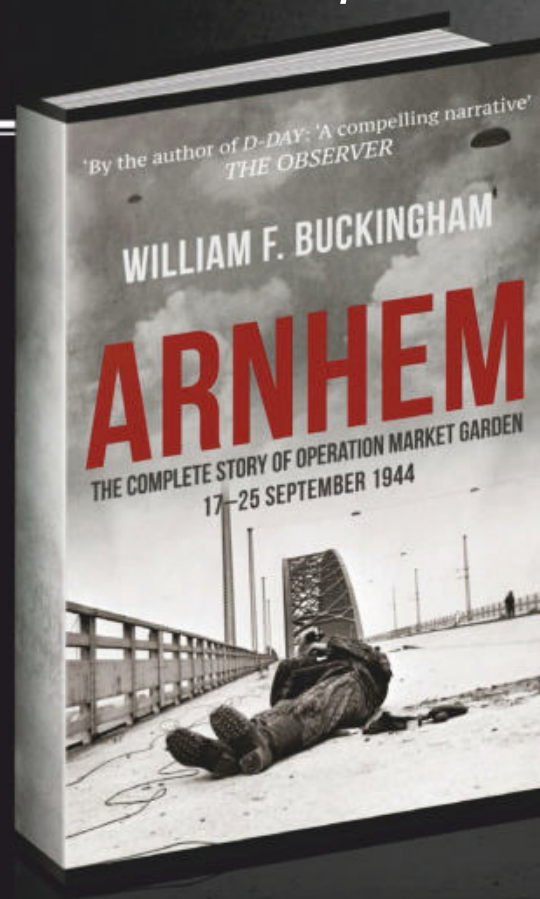
The 'Battle for the Bridges', and the causes for the Allied failure has attracted countless critical and often controversial accounts from military historians

ARNHEM

The Complete Story Of Operation Market Garden
17-25 September 1944
William F. Buckingham

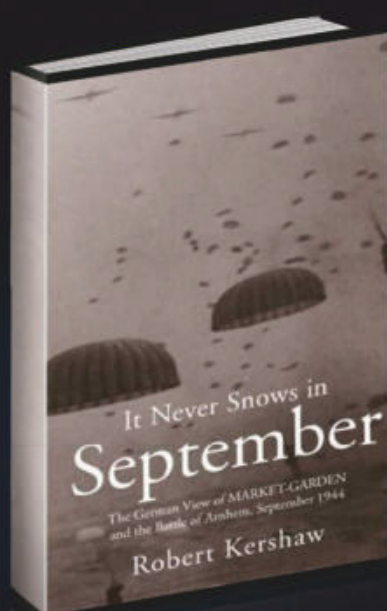
Alongside day-by-day, hour-by-hour battlefield analysis of the full operation, Buckingham's narrative also includes first-hand accounts from the last remaining veterans of Operation Market Garden. With an extensive list of sources and even an index, this certainly is among the most thorough accounts of the battle to date.

"BUCKINGHAM'S NARRATIVE ALSO INCLUDES FIRST-HAND ACCOUNTS FROM THE LAST REMAINING VETERANS"



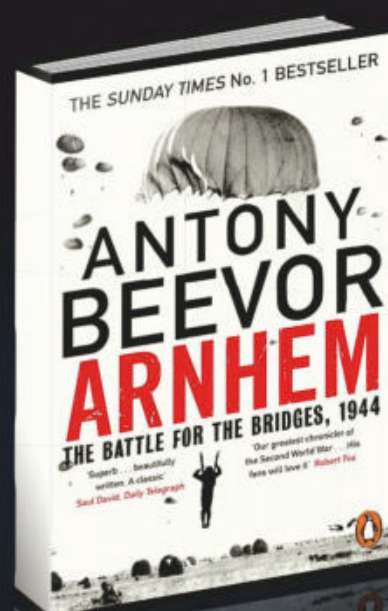
**Images Of War:
The Battle For Arnhem
1944-45**
Anthony Tucker-Jones

This instalment in Pen & Sword Military's *Images Of War* series contains incredible photographs of the fierce fighting for the bridges during the Allied operation, as well as its aftermath. Over 200 incredible archival photographs tell the story of not just the ill-fated operation, but also the eventual liberation of Arnhem, several months after the failure of the 1st Airborne troops.



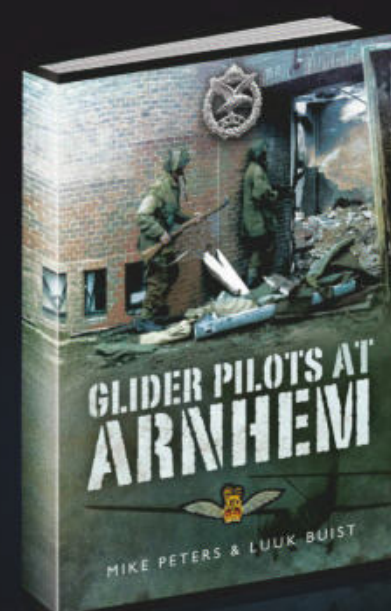
**'It Never Snows In
September' The German
View Of Market Garden**
Robert J. Kershaw

Providing a unique insight into the experience of German defenders during the operation, the author also challenges the idea of the 'bridge too far' at Arnhem. The determined British defence at Oosterbeek is also reassessed, as well as the vital contribution of American troops in keeping open the 'Airborne Corridor'.



**Arnhem:
The Battle For
The Bridges 1944**
Antony Beevor

In this *Sunday Times* #1 bestseller on the operation, the renowned military historian drew from Dutch, British, American, Polish and German sources, to provide a thorough and balanced account. Beevor applies his dramatic and engaging style to the narrative, providing readers with an accessible and engaging story, with no less detail and in-depth analysis.



**Glider Pilots
At Arnhem**
*Mike Peters
& Luuk Buist*

Often overlooked in short-form accounts of the battle are the experiences of the brave airmen who delivered the troops and equipment for the Market portion of the September 1944 campaign. This book focuses on the men of the Glider Pilot Regiment, who after their successful infiltration of enemy territory, were involved in the desperate defences at Oosterbeek.

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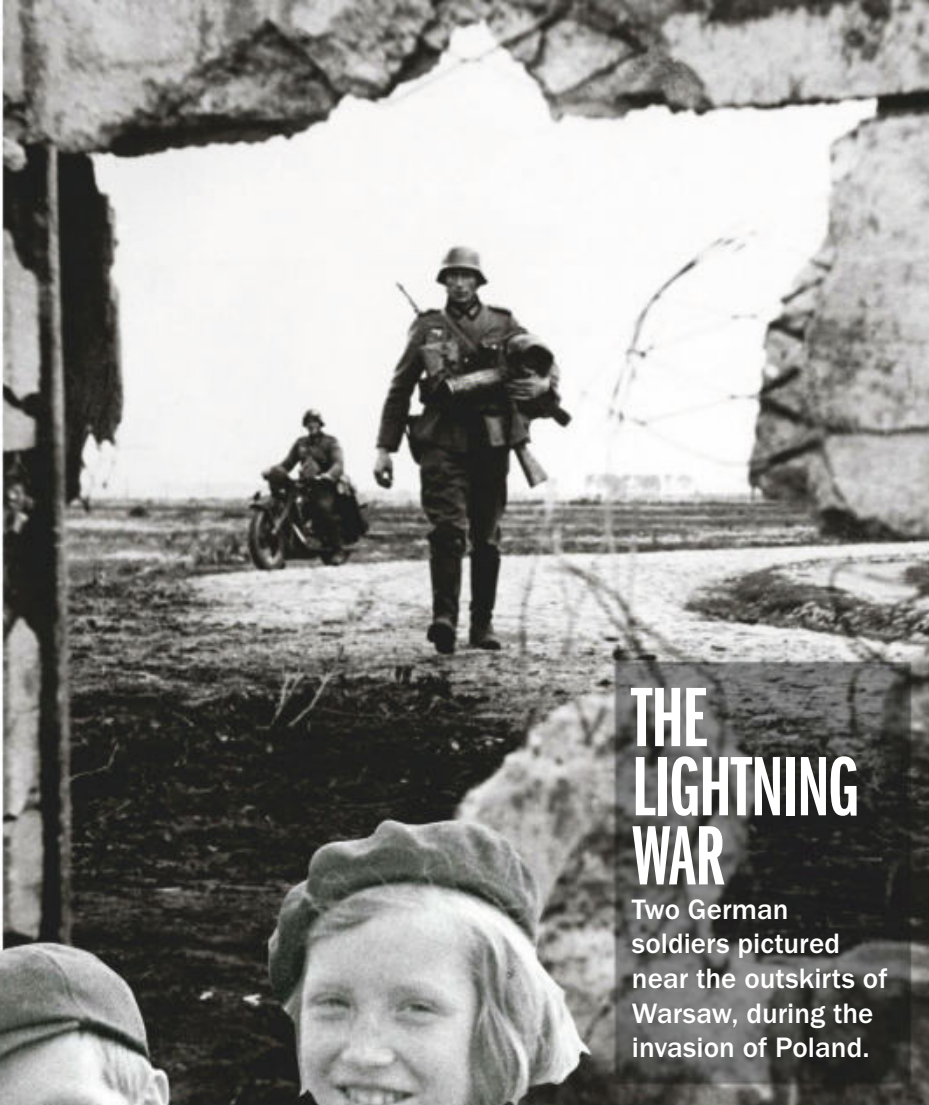
To commemorate 80 years since the Second World War, every issue **History of War** will be taking a look at some of the key events taking place each month of the conflict



“WISH ME LUCK AS YOU WAVE ME GOODBYE!”

A member of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) bids farewell to his family before departing for France. The first British troops arrived on 9 September, and soon almost 400,000 would be positioned along the Belgian frontier, where they would remain for the entirety of the ‘Phoney War’.





THE LIGHTNING WAR

Two German soldiers pictured near the outskirts of Warsaw, during the invasion of Poland.

VICTORY PARADE

Soviet and German officers take the salute as vehicles and infantry march past at Brest-Litowks. The city was located along the agreed border between the two countries after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact the previous month. The joint parade took place to celebrate the successful partition of Poland between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.

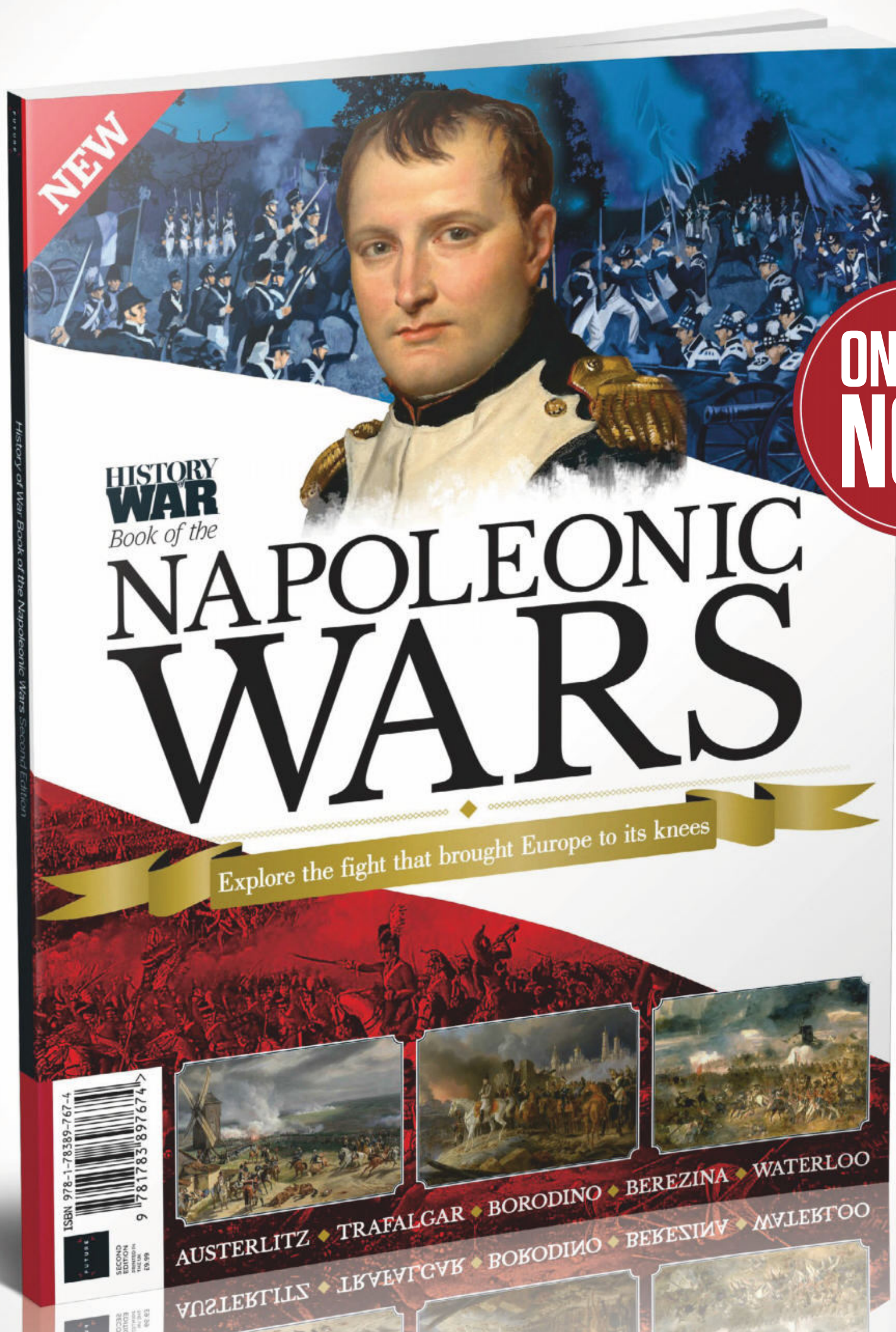


OPERATION PIED PIPER

British schoolchildren line up after arriving in the countryside somewhere in the Home Counties, following their evacuation from central London. Operation Pied Piper was a contingency plan for thousands of children to be moved away from cities and towns, which it was thought would become the target of enemy attacks. In the first four days of the war, over 3 million children were evacuated to the countryside.

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Image: Alamy

HISTORY WAR

Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA

Editorial

Editor-in-Chief **Tim Williamson**
timothy.williamson@futurenet.com

Senior Designer **Curtis Fermor-Dunman**

Features Editor **Tom Garner**

Production Editor **Tim Empey**

Senior Art Editor **Duncan Crook**

Contributors

William F Buckingham, Marianna Bukowski, Martyn Conterio, Murray Dahm, Stuart Hadaway, Mike Haskew, Paul Hooley, Mike Jones, Mark Simner, David Smith, Jules Stewart, William Welsh

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Advertising

Media packs are available on request

Commercial Director **Clare Dove**
clare.dove@futurenet.com

Regional Advertising Director **Mark Wright**
mark.wright@futurenet.com

Advertising Manager **Toni Cole**
toni.cole@futurenet.com

Media Sales Executive **Jagdeep Maan**
jagdeep.maam@futurenet.com

International

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International Licensing Director **Matt Ellis**
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Subscriptions

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Head of subscriptions **Sharon Todd**

Circulation

Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

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Head of Production **Mark Constance**

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Management

Chief Content Officer **Aaron Asadi**

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Brand Director **Evan Kypreos**

Head of Art & Design **Greg Whittaker**

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Amsterdam was just one of over 12 capitals of the Kingdom of Holland during Louis' reign because he could not decide on a permanent location for his capital city

LOUIS NAPOLEON KONING van HOLLAND
SCHENKT AAN ZYNE HOOFDSTAD AMSTERDAM
DEZE ZEGETEKENEN DOOR DAPPERE NEDERLANDEREN
OP DERZELVER VYANDEN VEROVERD

LOUIS BONAPARTE'S BANNER

Napoleon I's younger brother paraded this standard with Dutch military trophies to ingratiate himself as the puppet king of the Netherlands

On 5 June 1806, Napoleon installed his younger brother Louis as the 'King of Holland'. The new monarchy replaced the Batavian Republic, a client state that had existed since French revolutionary forces overthrew the old Dutch Republic in 1795.

Louis went to great efforts to please his new subjects. He declared himself Dutch and made a sincere attempt to learn the language. Shortly after becoming king, the former Corsican officer brought together national treasures such as military and naval trophies, including captured flags from previous

wars. On 31 July 1806, these items were transported from The Hague to the new capital of Amsterdam.

Flying at the head of the procession was this pictured banner, which was painted with Amsterdam's coat of arms, two lions and the imperial crown. Its text reads, "Louis Napoleon, King of Holland, presents to his capital Amsterdam these trophies presented by

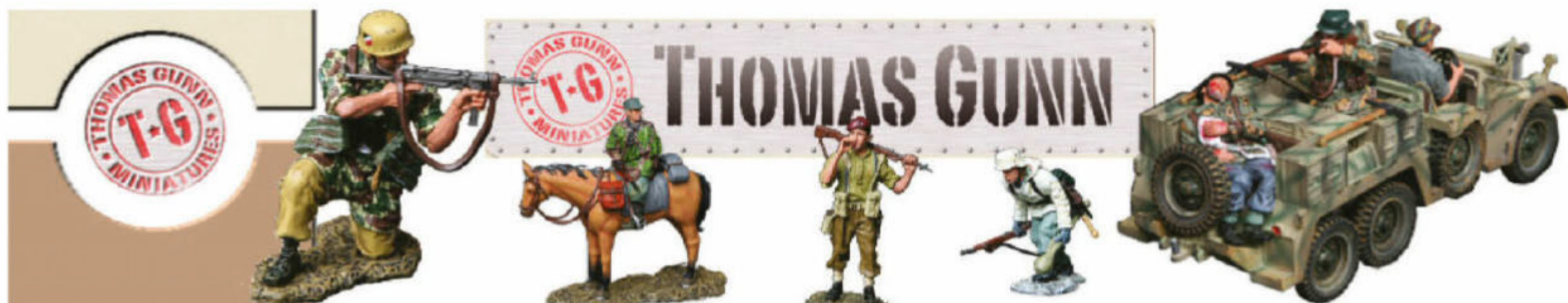
brave Netherlands from their enemies." The banner and procession were a propaganda stunt to reconcile the Netherlands' martial past to its new place as a Napoleonic satellite kingdom. The Dutch appreciated Louis' efforts and nicknamed him "Louis the Good" while many of their soldiers fought alongside Napoleon's armies.

Dutch troops participated in the Peninsular War and the Battle of Friedland among other campaigns during his reign.

Nevertheless, the king's rule was short-lived. British forces landed at Walcheren in 1809 while Louis tried to assert his independence when he refused to provide Dutch troops for Napoleon's planned invasion of Russia. His older brother eventually forced him to abdicate on 1 July 1810 and Louis fled to Austria. The Kingdom of Holland was formally annexed to France eight days later.

"LOUIS WENT TO GREAT EFFORTS TO PLEASE HIS NEW SUBJECTS. HE DECLARED HIMSELF DUTCH AND MADE A SINCERE ATTEMPT TO LEARN THE LANGUAGE"

Self-styled as 'Lodewijk I', Louis once accidentally declared that he was 'Konjin van 'Olland' ('Rabbit of Holland') rather than 'Koning van Holland' ('King of Holland')



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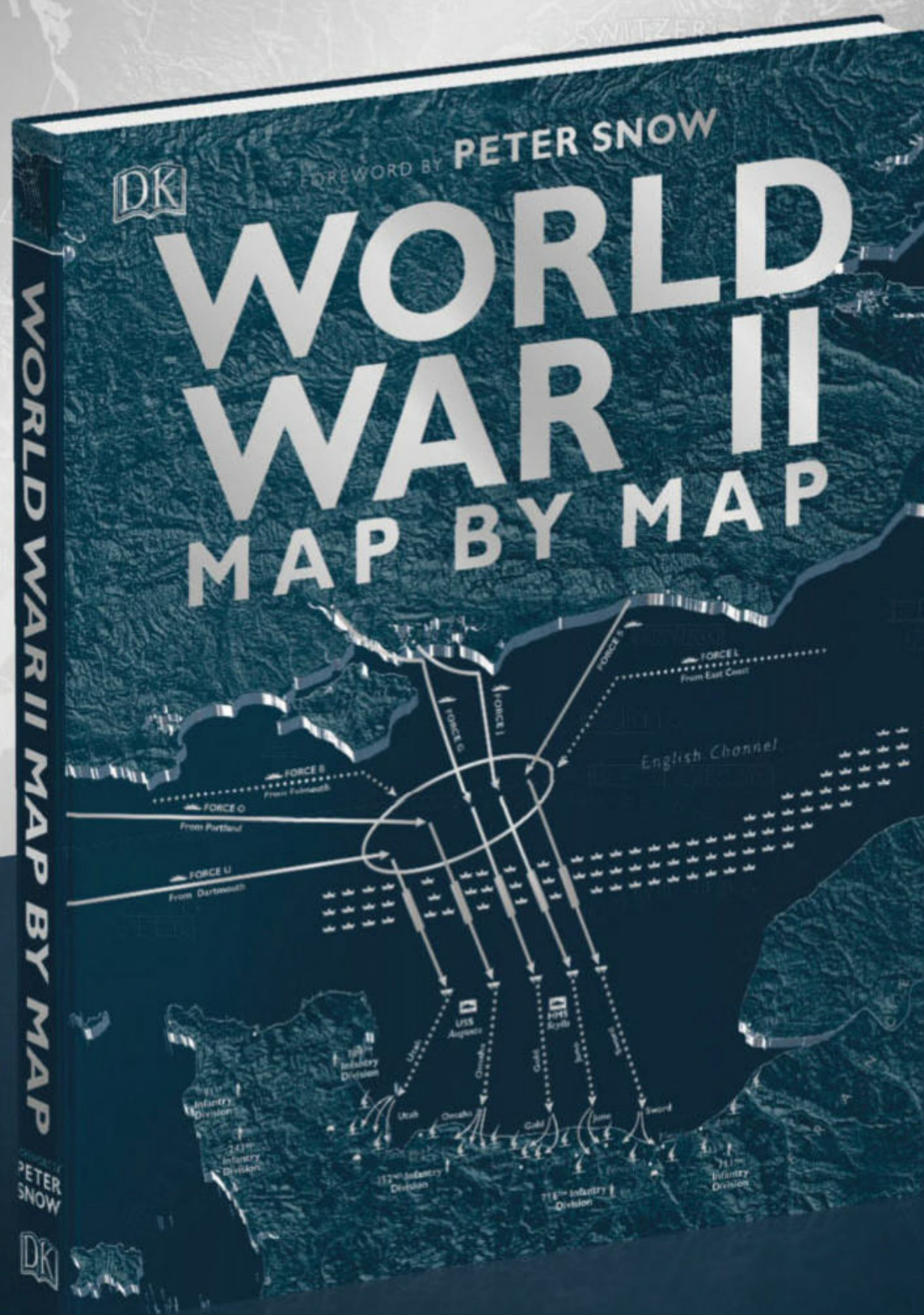
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